MARCH 1989
ISSUE SIX
AN EMAP PUBLICATION

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THE One

ATARI ST
AMIGA
PC

FOR 16-BIT GAMES



KEEPS ON RUNNING THE ARNIE STORY



FLYING TONIGHT!

JET FIGHTER

BLASTEROIDS DEMO-LITION

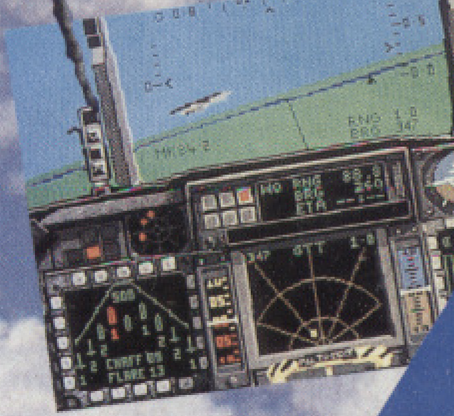


NO DISK? ASK NEWSAGENT

THE END IS NIGH MILLENNIUM 2.2



F-16



F-19



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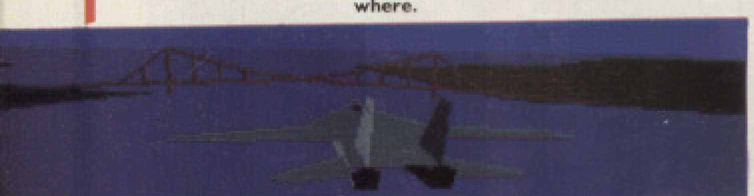


Issue Six of The One was edited by Gary Penn with artistic direction and production assistance from Gareth Jones. Advertisement Manager Mark Scriven somehow managed to persuade the software houses to 'book space', while Magazine Assistant Jenni Dunphy controlled the flow of copy, ordered stationery, made copious cups of coffee and... organised the cock-ups. Paul Boughton, Brian Nesbitt, Graham Taylor and Gary Whitta contributed copy, while Ciaran Brennan helped rearrange and rewrite it as well as producing some scribblings of his own. Most of the pictures were taken by Ian Watson, with all B/W processed and printed by his fair hands and colour transparancies processed by Lancasters Laboratories Ltd. The cash-flow and general administration was ably monitored by 'Naughty' Clive Pembridge. All typesetting and artwork was produced by the guys 'n' gals at Professional Reprographic Services of 53a Huntingdon High Street, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 6AQ, and Terry and the boys at Mainset, 171 Hemmingford Road, London N1 were responsible for the colour origination. The film was then sent by carrier pigeon to be printed by Southern Print at Upton Factory, Upton, Poole in Dorset before EMAP Frontline Ltd did the business, distributing The One worldwide (well, the UK, Eire and Europe anyway).

And for collectors among you, here's a little something for your address books...

The busy bees in editorial and advertising can be reached on 01 251 6222 or via facsimile on 01 608 2696. The Address, as ever, is The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Subscription queries should be directed to PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 0AA, or call 0858 410510, and any back issue or newstrade queries should be put to EMAP Frontline Ltd, 1 Lincoln Court, Peterborough PE1 2RP. Telephone 0733 555161.

Finally, Kylie and Jason say a big Especially For You thanks to: mothers everywhere.



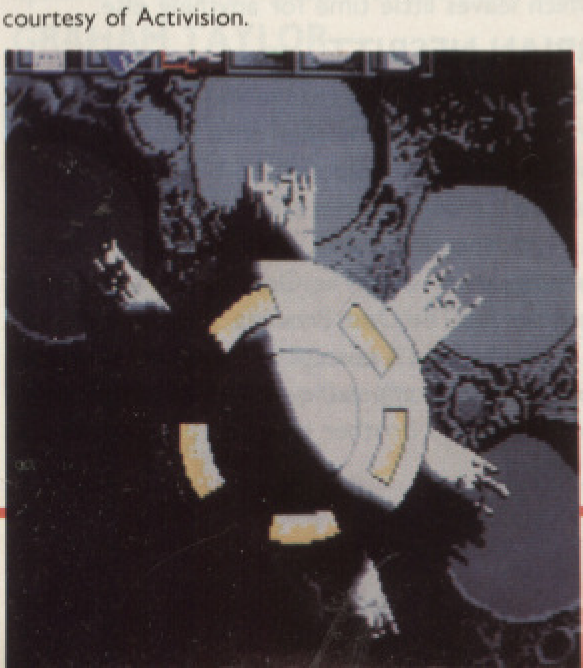




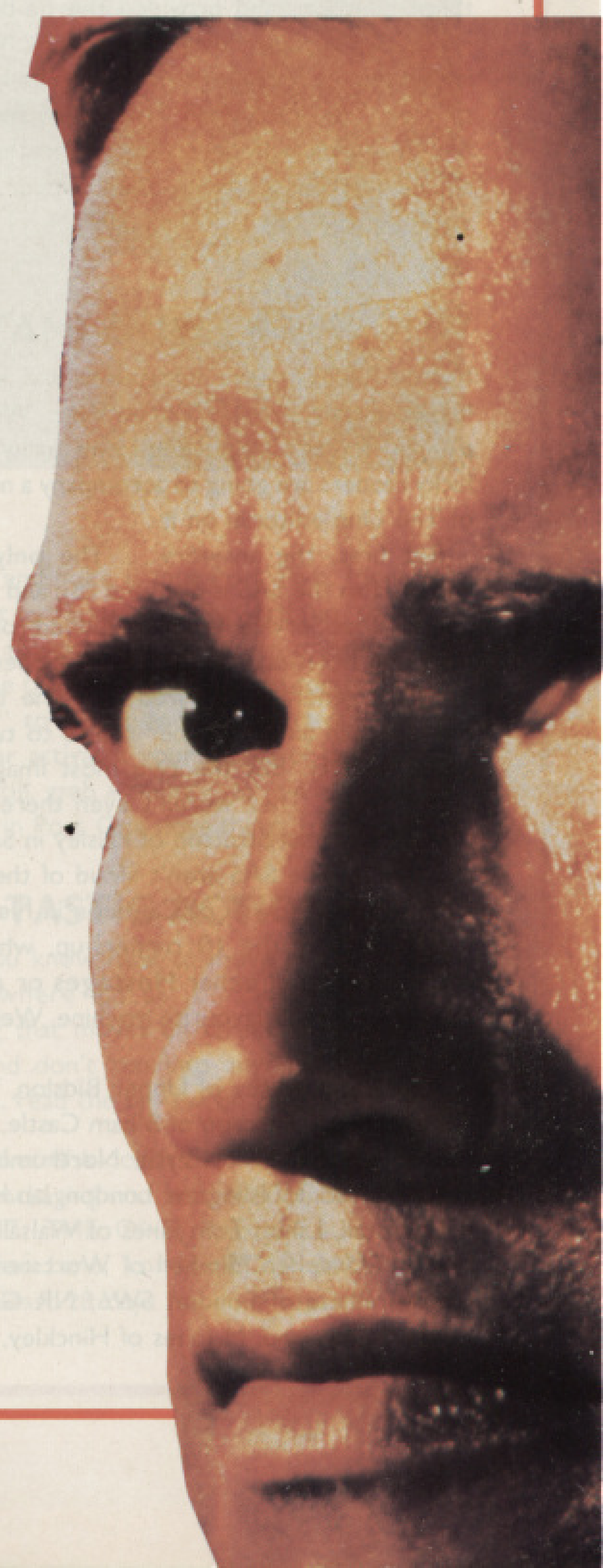
ENTS







ADVERTISERS INDEX



COMPETITION RESULTS

JUMPTER JAPES

Snicker. Excuse the typographical error. Some of you didn't notice, but this should have read Jumper Japes. Archer Maclean's unique **IK+** jumper was up for grabs, provided someone, somewhere could answer three simple questions and make us laugh with a witty tie-breaker.

Just for the record, the name of the person who played the part of the 'Karte' Kid (or rather, the Karate Kid), is Ralph Macchio. Archer Maclean's two previous releases were **Dropzone** and **International Karate,** and the personality famous for jumpers is Frank 'Jumpers' Bough.

The person who correctly answered the three questions and provided the tie-breaking rib-tickler (or tie-tickling rib-breaker): 'Why do karate people love jumpers? They get a kick out of them,' was Jonathan Perkins of Bideford, North Devon – congratulations Jonathan, you should just be receiving your jumper as the good weather appears (only joking).

WHO DARES WINS (MAYBE)

Maison De Software Infogrames has a super lovely smashing Who Dares Wins Weekend planned for this March. And two lucky, lucky, lucky readers are going to accompany a member of The One editorial on it.

But first, the answers .. The only thing harder than the SAS is diamond (B), and (B) the Special Boat Service has been dubbed (on more than one occasion) the SAS with flippers. Tie-breakers generally followed the 'one to hold the lightbulb and the other chums to turn the house' variety. But the two most imaginative were: 'None. They weren't even there at the time,' from Sean Stratton of Paisley in Scotland and 'None. The SAS aren't afraid of the dark,' from Richard Howell of Caerleon in Newport.

But what of the 10 runners-up, who each receive a copy of either **Hostages** or **Action Service** for their favourite machine. Well, in no particular order . . .

Andrew Hawksby of Upper Bidslon, Wirral; Christopher Tomlinson of B'ham Castle, Bromwich; Paul Walker of Blyth, Northumberland; Jason Harrison of Islington, London; Ian Heap of Rawtenstall, Lancs; Tom Lines of Walsall, West Midlands; Stephen Mitchell of Worcster WR5; Charles Platts of London SW6; NR Grant of Redcar, Cleveland; M Jones of Hinckley, Leics.

ONE STEP BEYOND

Welcome to Issue Six of The One, over six months young and far from complete. The issue in your hands is just the beginning, and the best is yet to come. The magazine as a whole is being continually refined and expanded, in particular our unique review format.

Using screenshots in conjunction with detailed captions is undoubtedly the best way of conveying the feel of a game, but there are still plenty of tweaks to be made.

We intend to include more programmer information concerning any problems and intentions. It's often interesting to find out a bit more about the subject matter in question, especially in the case of tie-ins and coin-op conversons. Hopefully the Work In Progress feature on page 14 will serve to show just how involved it is putting a game together. The technical side of things is low-key at present, but let us know if you want us to delve a little deeper into the tricks involved.

Then there's the ratings . . . We want to keep things simple, which is why we don't employ any fancy bars or graphs or special names for categories. We want to give you the fans, straight.

The GRAPHICS rating doesn't necessarily reflect how good a game looks, but how well the graphics have been used. Similarly, the SOUND rating concerns how well music, speech and sound effects integrate themselves in the gameplay. PLAYABILITY concerns how well a game plays and feels. Is it addictive or fun to play? The lasting VALUE takes into consideration price and potential lasting appeal, while the OVERALL rating provides an at-a-glance comparison figure. We take 50% is a strict average, and at least two people play each game. And that's about it, really.

We welcome any queries, complaints, suggestions and the like, so feel free to get scribbling and let us know what you think.

AND FINALLY . . .

HM Burges of Hexham, Northumberland and G Knight of Great Dunmow, Essex have both won Amigas – thanks to a little competition we ran in WH Smith stores last year. They agreed with the panel of judges on the order of key reasons for owning an Amiga, and also managed to correctly answer the tie-breaker question.

REVIEW-SATIONAL WRITERS

Meet the gang 'cos the boys are here, the boys to entertain you . . . Here's this month's star studded cast.

PAUL LEE (Nee Boughton)

Deputy Editor on sister publication C+VG until he decided to pursue a freelance career, Paul (or Sweetypie as he is known about the house), enjoys **AD&D, Arkanoid** and **Night Hunter.**

CIARÁN BRENNAN

In an attempt to retain his youthful good looks and cheeky boyish charm, Ciarán recently underwent complicated scalp surgery. Modesty permits him mentioning from where the hair was transplanted, but suffice it to say he now sports a healthy head of ginger curls . . . Ciarán currently gets his kicks from **Hybris** and **Denaris,** and he used to work on ZZAP!, CRASH and AMIX! – among others.

TONY 'MATT' DILLON

A third of the EMAP Brat Pack, Tony is absolutely no relation to Matthew. The bespectacled babe of the reviewing world also does his stuff for sister rags Sinclair User, Commodore User and C+VG – in between lengthy sessions on **Jetfighter** and **F19 Stealth Fighter.**

TIM 'LORNE' GREEN

No-one could call Tim green (apart form his mother). You could call him yellow, but that'd make him feel blue. When he's not writing features on Arnold Schwarzenegger for The One, Tim writes features on a typewriter for Screens magazine.

DECLAN McCOLGAN

Whoever coined the anecdote 'it's a small world' couldn't have realised just how small it really is. Ciarán Brennan used to live opposite the young lady now in wedlock with Declan, the Features Editor of sister magazine PC User. Dec gets a buzz out of **F19 Stealth Fighter,** which leaves little time for anything else.

BRIAN NESBITT

"One day the wind'll change and you'll look like an Amiga," Brian's mother once said. The well-ventilated cream-coloured 16-bit 'Buoy' Wonder has a tree-mendous talent for training spots . . . erm, spotting trains. When he's not 'tied up' writing reviews for The One, he's free to write reviews for The One. Brian's a 'fungi' and enjoys a challenge, and is currant-ly trying to find a use for the humble appendix, which he had removed last week. His brother owns an ST.



GARY PENN
He used to sport a prominent tonsural sculpture atop his bonce, until a flock of passing seagulls set up shop, forcing him to lop it off. The erstwhile ZZAP! Ed still enjoys Speedball – and that's about it!

TRACEY SNELL
PC User's News Writer plays to win. Young Trace will probably provide the occasional PC opinion, so keep 'em peeled for this Likely Lass.

GRAHAM TAYLOR
The ST and Amiga are no strangers to the Editor of Sinclair User, which is why he's one of our happy crowd, writing reviews and performing deeds of derring do.

GARY WHITTA
The brightest new face on the reviewing scene has been playing games since the days of the Binatone console. **TV Sports Football, Hybris** and **Chase HQ** keep Gaz amused when he's not bemused.

WHY A COW CALLED ERIC?
Strapped to the front of this magazine is the reason for the temporary price increase – a disk featuring a brilliant playable demo of Image Works' first coin-op conversion, **Blasteroids.** The extra quid is to cover the huge duplication costs involved, but I trust you will agree that this is a small price to pay for a blank disc let alone one with such a 'gear' demo.

We apologise for the lack of a PC version or even a special PC offer, but there's nothighn practical we could do. Rest assured we shall attempt to rectify the situation for the next cover-mounted disk.

LOADING
Ah, if only life was as simple as loading this disk. All you have to do is insert the disk into the drive then turn on your machine. The **Blasteroids** should then load and run automatically.

PLAYING THE GAME
Another exceptionally easy bit, this. Grab a joystick and poke it into Port Two. Move left and right to rotate, push forward (up) to thrust and pull towards you (down) to transform.

Or use the keys 'Z' and 'X' to rotate left and right, 'P' to thrust and 'L' to transform. The space bar activates your means of destruction. Better still, grab a chum(p) to join in the fun. A joystick in Port One does things to the second ship.

KILL-TASTIC ACTION
Now you know how to move to the groove, here's where it's at ... Shoot 'n' destroy anything that moves on screen to complete a level, and don't run into anything – it hurts. Actually, read the review on page 24.

If the cover disk doesn't work, drop it in some sturdy packaging and send it to: DISK REPLACEMENT, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Please wait at least 28 days for your replacement to arrive.

SOUND COMMENT

Dear The One,

The mag's great – so why am I writing to complain? Well, in your machine specific rating and write-up, it almost always says that the sound on the Amiga is better than the ST version, yet the actual rating is virtually never any different.

Why?

Sputnik.

If you stop to think about it for a second, the reason is really simple. Although it is true that the Amiga is capable of making nicer noises than the ST, we take this anomaly into account when we rate each version. So if both versions of a game take advantage of the hardware available to the same degree (even if there is a variation in what eventually vibrates your ear-drums) they get an equal rating. Simple, eh?

THE NEW GENERATION?

Dear The One,

Have you ever made a bad mistake? I have. I sold my Spectrum and C64 (plus all the disks, games etc) and upgraded to an Atari ST.

Oh what an error! My first game was the superb **Dungeon Master**. I've now played it to death and am really looking forward to **Chaos Strikes BAck** – in fact I'm looking forward to anything decent. The ST has no decent software, apart from a couple of classics: **Carrier Command, Dungeon Master, Carrier Command** and, and... know what I mean.

It seems that everything is an 8-bit re-write or a grotty shoot 'em up. If anyone is shouting about **Elite** for the ST – that originally came out on a computer with a memory smaller than a Spectrum.

I've noticed that **Chuckie Egg** is now available for the 16-bit computers. Talk about *deja vu*. All ST owners are now looking forward with some excitement to the future release of **Sabre Wulf**!

I'm sure that, like me, most ST and Amiga owners are eagerly awaiting 'the next big thing'. Until then, has anyone got an old Spectrum for sale?

S Waite, Kenton, Middlesex.

Y CLWYB PD

Dear Sir,

I would like to use your letters page to inform your readers of a new PD club which I am setting up for ST and Amiga owners. Anyone out there with decent demos, pictures and music can send them direct to me at: 37 Rhin Tremaen, Brackla, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales CF31 2JA, or ask for me at (0656) 68289 after 5pm.

Allan Shaun, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales.

OUT NOW

Dear Sir,

In the January issue I read the promising **IK**+Update for the Amiga, and decided to go out and buy the game straight away. I tried numerous shops, but found that it was not released until the end of January. I think you should try and be a bit more accurate in the release dates that you print.

Nik K, London

It looks as though apologies are in order yet again. However, we always check the release dates with the companies involved, so if the game doesn't appear on the date stated, its probably due to some sort of production delay at the publisher's end.

PC OR NOT PC?

Dear Sirs,

I have just finished reading Issue Five from cover to cover, and although I enjoyed the general style and layout of your magazine, I do have the following criticisms to make.

The logo on the front cover shows the magazine to be for owners of the Atari ST, Amiga and PC machines. Please can you tell me, as the owner of an IBM PC, where the PC content has got to? In the whole magazine the PC is mentioned (not written about) in less than a dozen places – and most of those are adverts.

I do realise that PC owners are in a minority compared with the owners of the toy machines, but I feel that as you purport to support us in the games field you should do more than give us just a passing mention while discussing the wonders of modern toyshop technology.

To add insult to injury, your marketing 'blurb' on page six states that the cost of the next issue will be raised to cover the cost of a preview disk which will apparently not run on a PC. I will not be buying that issue, or any further issues, but will instead wait for a magazine that genuinely supports my machine in the games field.

M R Pheasant, Aston Tirrold, Oxfordshire.

Dear The One,

I am the proud owner of an Amstrad PC, so please could you try to bring out a free demo disk for us discerning PC owners.

I read The One every month and I'd like to compliment you on your reviews, which help me a lot when I come to making a purchasing decision. So in future could you please include a PC square alongside the ST and Amiga squares?

Jonathan Gray, Cricklewood, London.

The major problem which we encounter in covering the IBM-compatible machines is that they are not yet generally recognised as games machines on this side of the Atlantic, and companies are still only beginning to convert their 16-bit titles to this format. That said, we have covered PC-specific games over the last couple of issues and intend to build up this coverage as they become more common. Where possible, we attempt to provide a PC version box at the end of each review and an update when the product finally appears. On the subject of the cover-mounted disk, it's physically impossible to actually fit any more data on the disk so something had to give. We're sorry that it was the PC product which got left out, but as PC gamesplayers are still very much in a minority it only seemed fair to use the space as we did. So M R Pheasant, if you do somehow manage to see this reply (if you pick the mag up in a newsagent or something), please bear with us as we're doing all we can.

INDIVIDUAL SLICES

Dear The One,

It's the first time I've seen your excellent mag. I don't really have any small niggles about it, except for some of your reviews. The reviews are great in colour, description and marking. But in one of the other magazines I used to read, it had one thing extra. It had individual reviewers, at least three. It gave us different views to different people's attitudes towards the games they try out.

I agree with Andy Thompson (Issue Four) on having a better ratings system, but rating system like Ace's! Your system gives Price, Release Date, Graphics, Sound, Playability, Value and Overall. What else do people want? Blood!

Cunningham Hutchinson, Midlothian, Scotland.

Actually all of the games reviewed in the magazine are played by at least two people – and usually three. Although only one name appears at the head of each review, the boxed comments at the end are more often than not the result of a lively debate and always end up reflecting the opinions of everyone who's played the game in question. Do you really want to read the same opinion phrased in three different ways?

AND FINALLY

Clive Erickson's letter which we printed last month elicited a massive amount of mail, most of which was completely unprintable (including a number of descriptive phrases which Brian Nesbitt had never even dreamed existed). Clive's main point – that the ST wasn't worthy of coverage alongside the Amiga – got right up the noses of quite a few ST owners and even, surprisingly, a number of Amiga owners too. Obviously nobody here is at all in agreement with Mr Erickson, but the reason that we didn't print any of the replies is that this is one debate that we don't intend to enter into.

However, if you have anything to say to us on any other subject, don't hestitate to write in to:

LETTERS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London ECIR 3AU.


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BLASTEROIDS
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CREDITS 0
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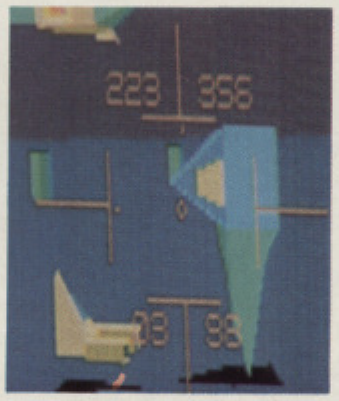
A SPACE ODDITY

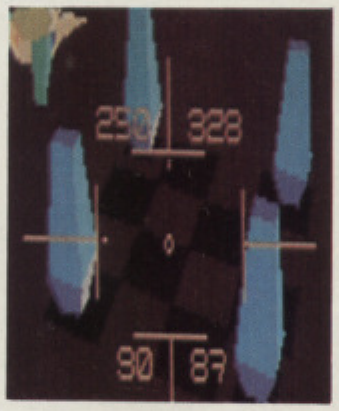
IN 1977 Voyager II was launched into space, inviting all life forms in the universe to visit our planet. Get ready. Company's coming.

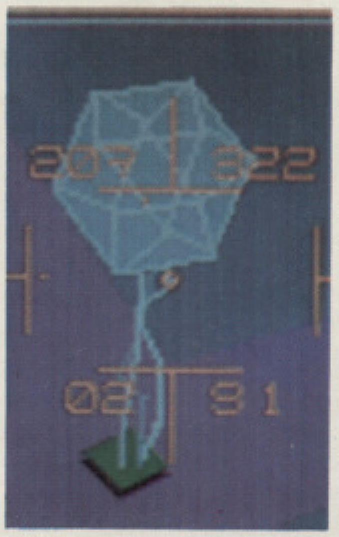
Since mid-July of last year, Daniel Gallagher and Mike Crowley have been working on **Voyager,** their 16-bit debut. Now it's all but complete and ready for release through Ocean, and it looks like it could have as much impact as **Starglider II.**

Developed under the title of **Orion's Belt, Voyager** concerns NASA's Voyager II, launched into deep space carrying information on the position of Earth and the type of creatures inhabiting it. The probe also bore an invitation, asking any alien life form that might find it to come and visit.

Hundreds of years after its launch, NASA's baby to fall into the hands of an alien race from another galaxy. Using the information in the satellite, the aliens have found Earth and holed up in the 10 moons around Saturn, fortifying their positions in preparation for an attack. In an effort to stop them before they get a chance to start an invasion, a large mothership is dispatched from earth and drops off a small single-seater tank. This one small ship might be able to slip through the alien's defences unnoticed and then sabotage their bases.

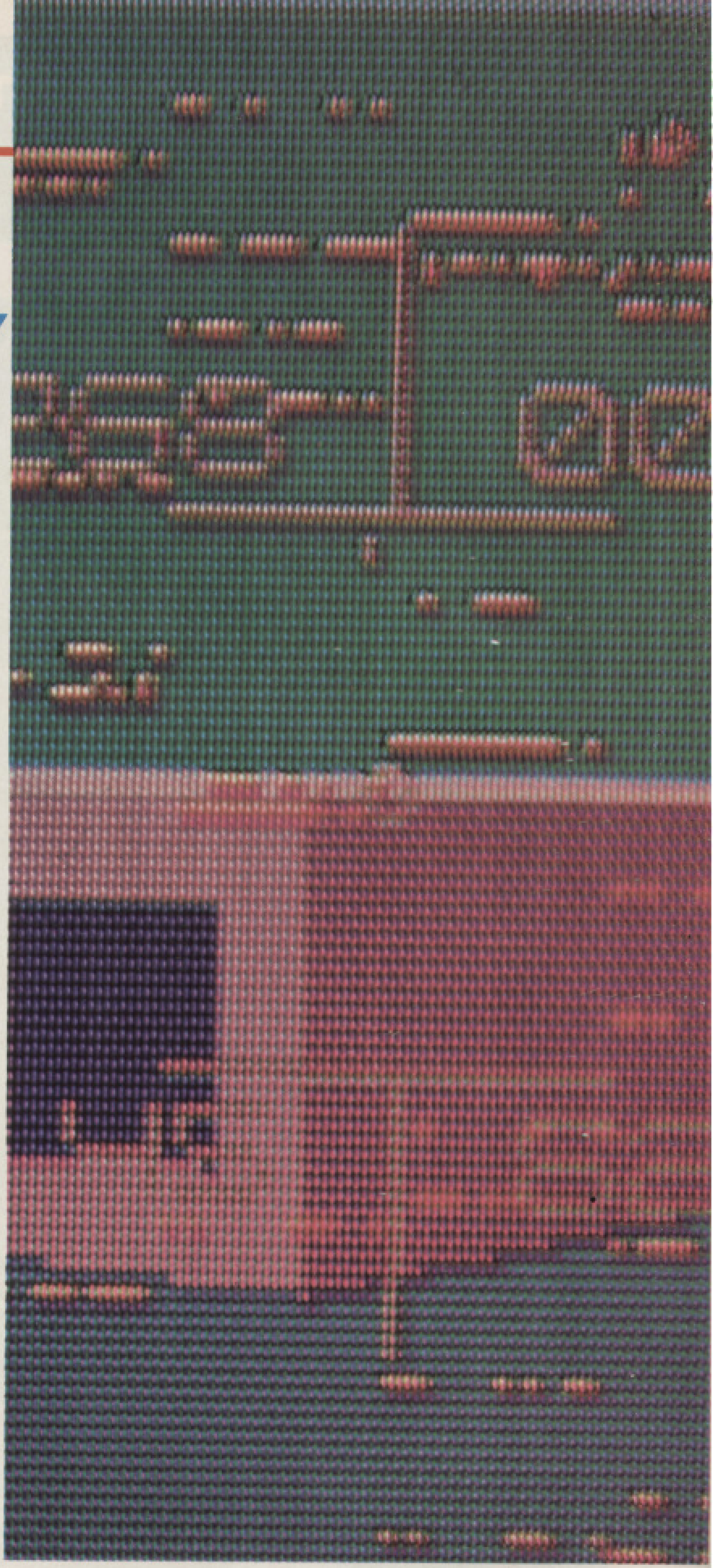


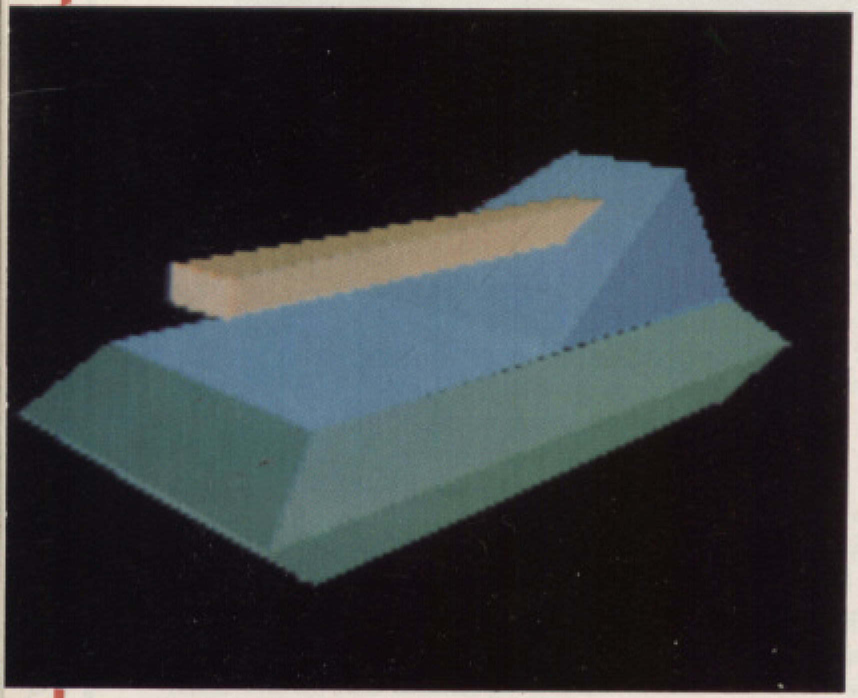


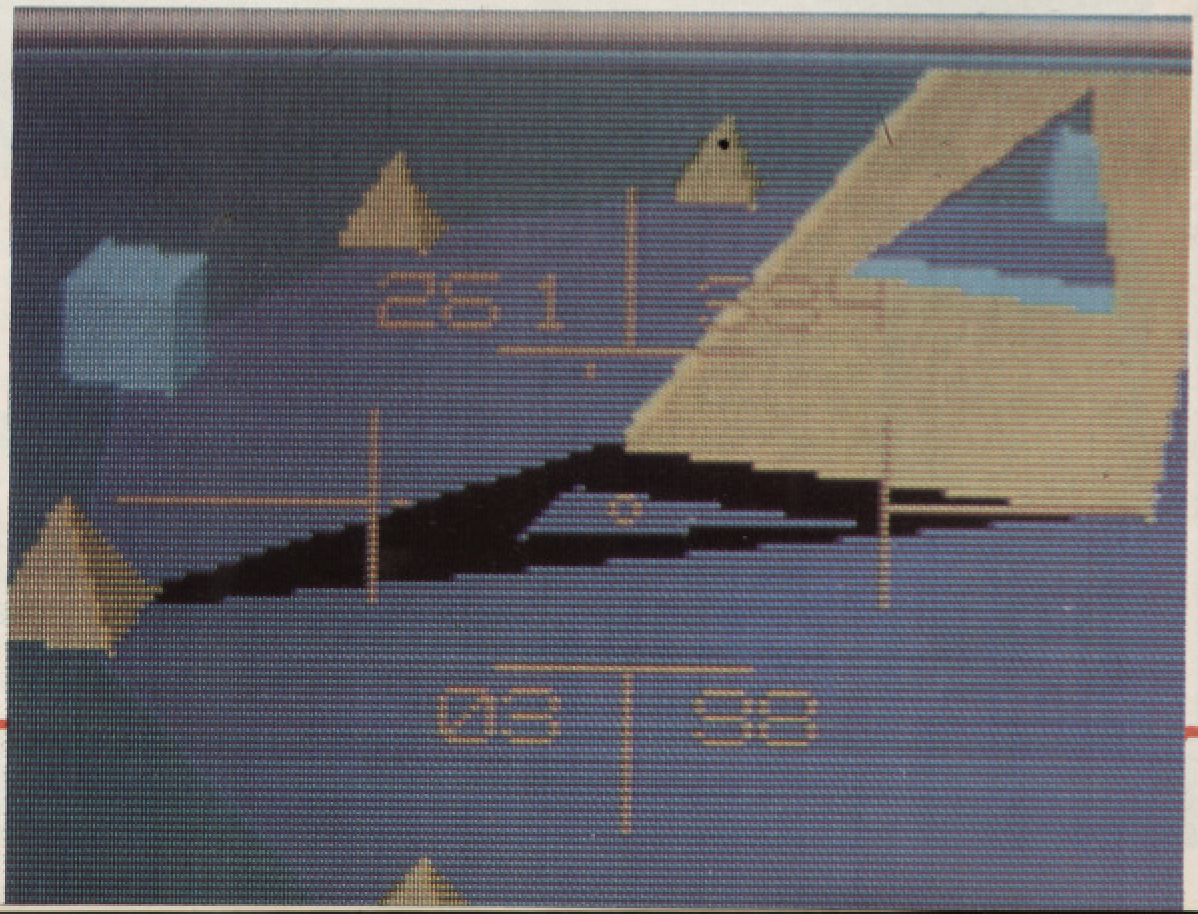


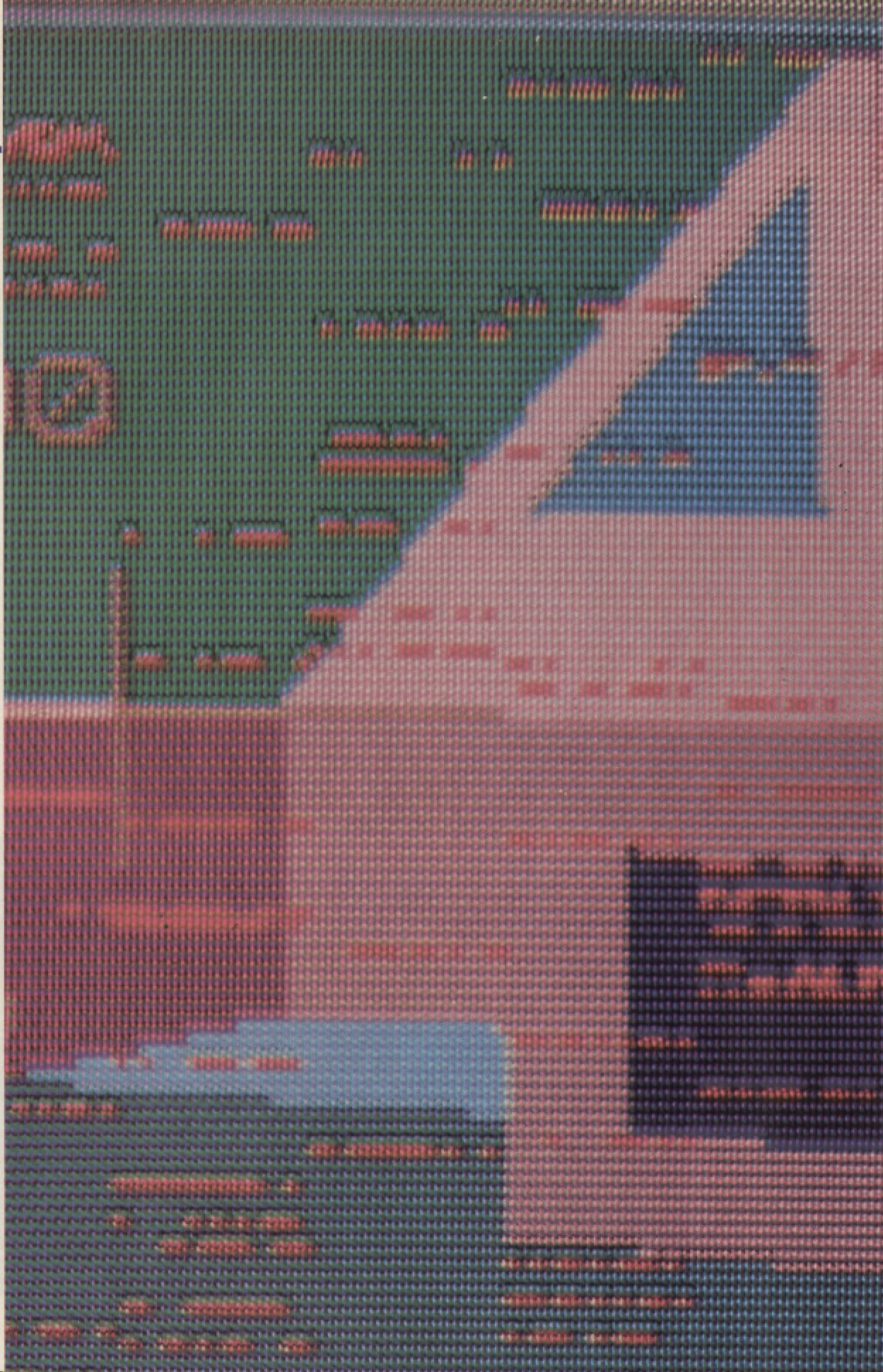
Solid 3D graphics are the order of the day here (Daniel and Mike feels that this looks much better than the wireframe variety), but the action is a little more shoot 'em up orientated than the Argonaut classic. The object is to clear the moons of alien activity, with the extra-terrestrials becoming more difficult to defeat as the game progresses. Luckily there are plenty of extras to improve your firepower and transform the tank into a more manoeuvrable (but gas - uzzling) skimmer craft.

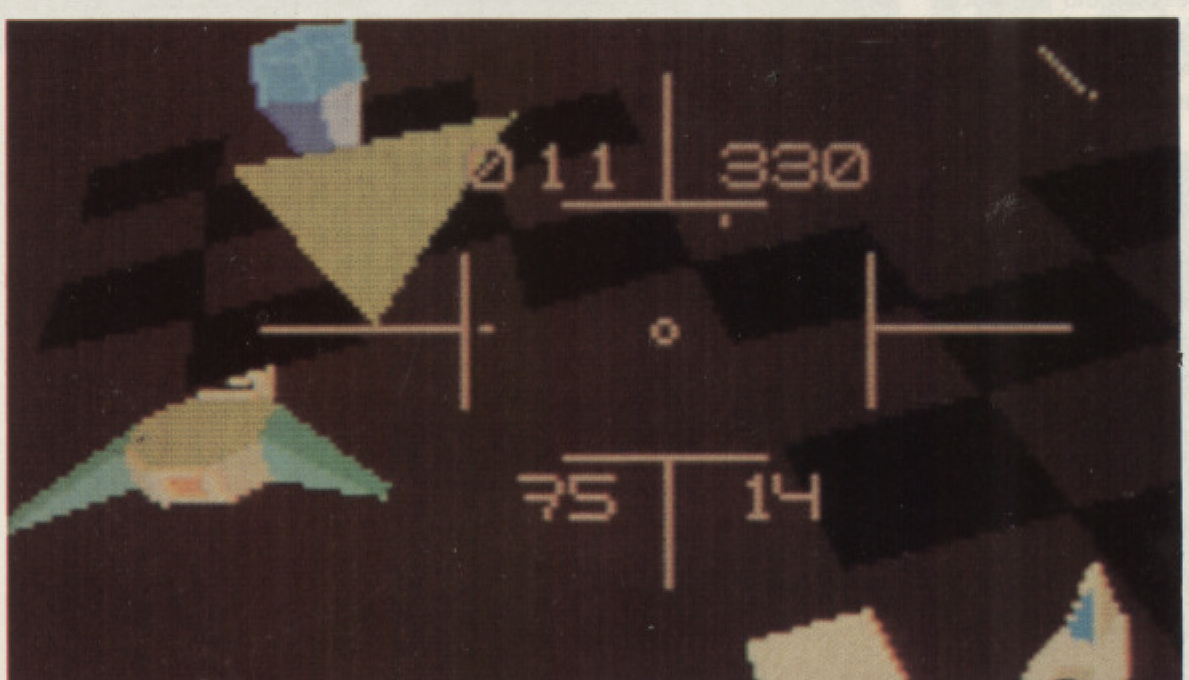
Voyager is more or less finished now, with Dan and Mike smoothing off the rough edges and tweaking the graphics routines in time for a release on the ST and Amiga in May at £19.95 and £24.95 respectively. A PC version is to follow later in the year.







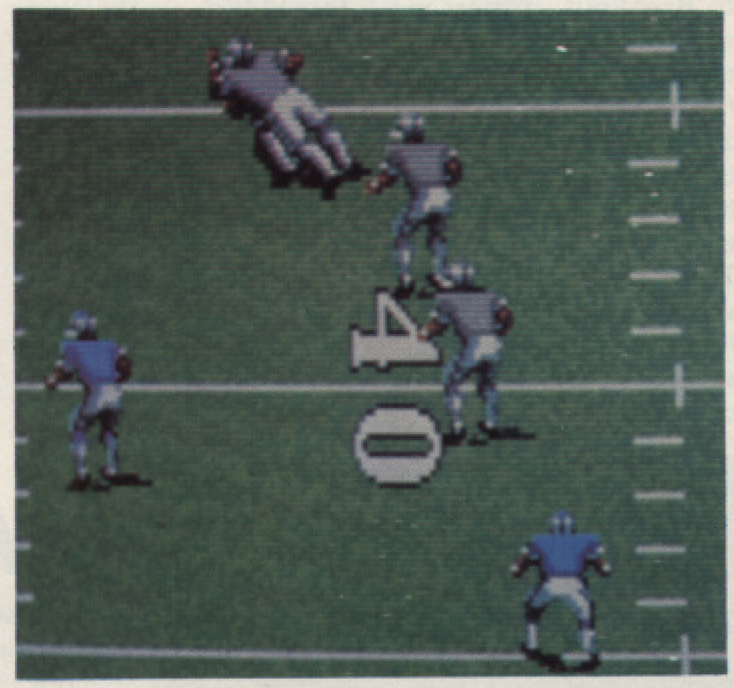




TOP TEN

(Month Ending February '89)

COMMODORE AMIGA



TV Sports Football **puts Cinemaware on top.**

1	NE	TV SPORTS FOOTBALL (Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft)
2	1	FALCON (Spectrum HoloByte/Mirrorsoft)
2	NE	SWORD OF SODAN (Discovery)
4	6	SPEEDBALL (Image Works)
5	2	LOMBARD RAC RALLY (Mandarin)
5	7	ELITE (Firebird)
7	NE	HEROES OF THE LANCE (SSI/US Gold)
8	4	THUNDERBLADE (US Gold)
9	RE	FLIGHT SIMULATOR II (SubLogic)
10	3	OPERATION WOLF (Ocean)

Compiled exclusively for The One by SOFTWARE CIRCUS LTD, The Plaza On Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON WIN 9DP. Tel: 01 436 2811.

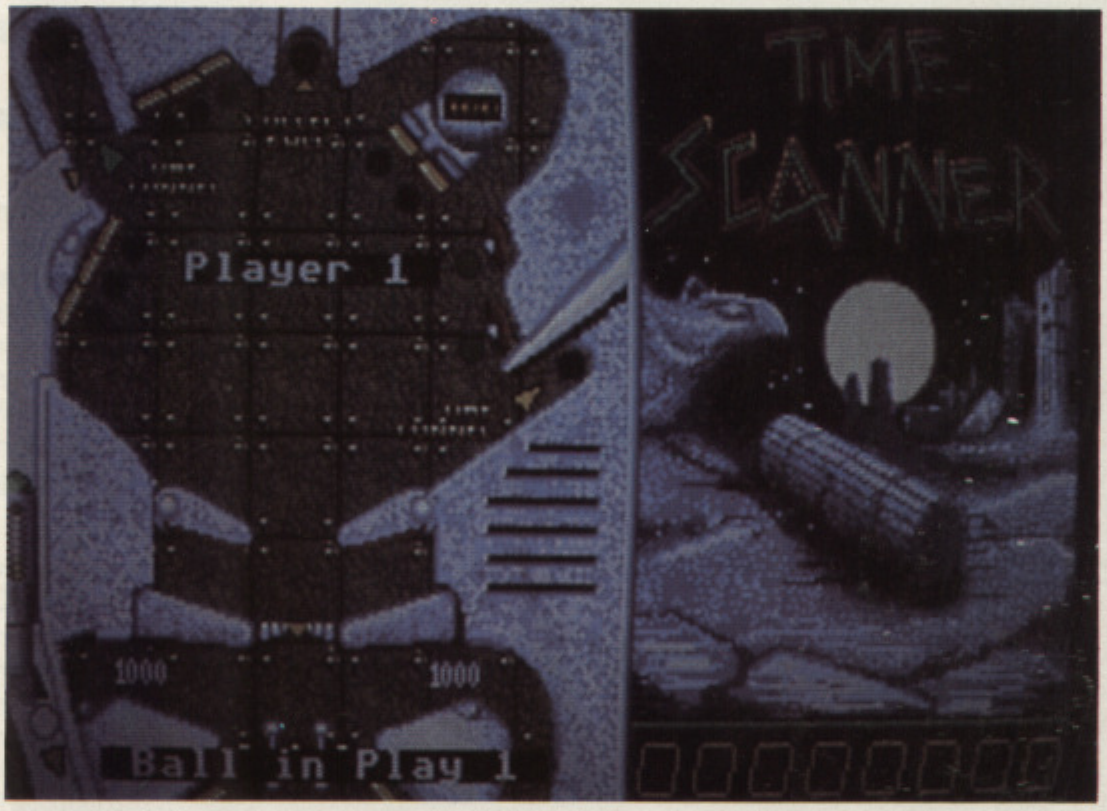
TIMESCANNER

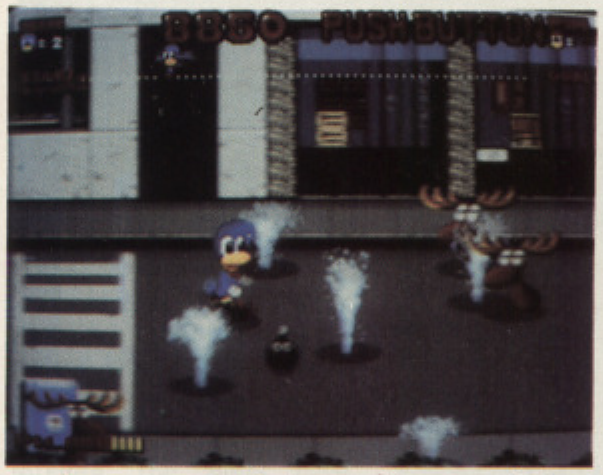
ELECTRIC Dreams' conversion of **Timescanner,** Sega's fantasy video pinball coin-op, is almost ready for release on the ST and Amiga. Described as being to pinball what **Arkanoid** is to **Breakout, Timescanner** features four scrolling tables, each littered with fantasy-orientated features and hazards that whisk the ball off to new screens, turn it into a blazing football and even split it into three. There are tunnels to traverse, bonus bumpers to light in sequence for bonuses and flippers (up to six on a table).

Each table has its own theme, such as an Egyptian setting with a suitably sandy colour scheme and even Sand Dance background music!

Foursfield (creator of the **Incredible Shrinking Sphere**) is beavering away on the conversion and is confident that it's managed to capture the graphic feel and gameplay of the original, as well as all the extra touches such as the speech and introductory screens.

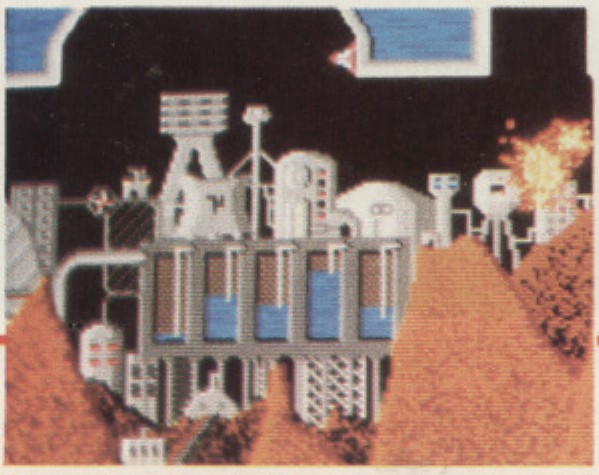
Timescanner is due for release in April, and there should be full review next month.





Activision's complement of Sega coin-op titles makes it to double figures with the acquisition of Dynamite Dux, **an everyday story of firebreathing water fowl, and** Super Wonderboy, **the follow-up to the ever-popular** Wonderboy. **The ink is still wet on the dotted line, and Activision has yet to make any decisions as to exact release dates or programmers.**

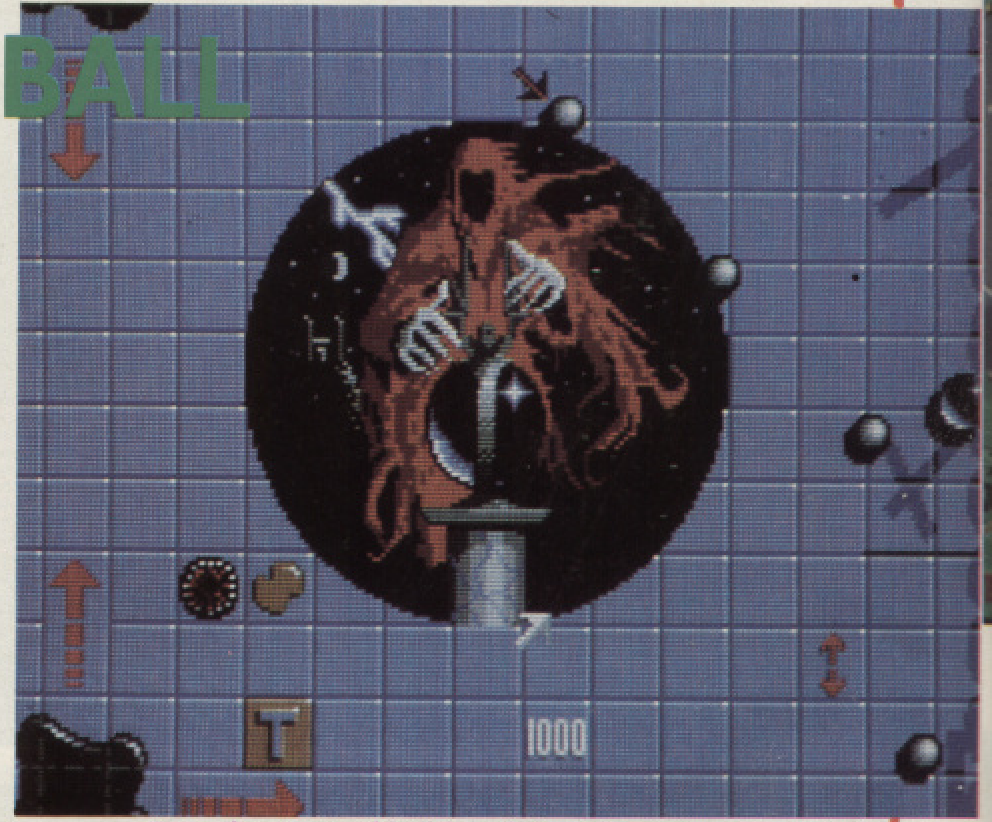
Impressions is the name of a mysterious new label – and impressions seems to be its business too, as its first product, Raiders, **bears a striking similarity to that ST classic** Oids. **The interplanetary rescue mission is set across eight planets divided into 40 levels, with a few extra mystery levels thrown in for good measure. Amiga owners can see what all the fuss is about in mid March, with an ST version following in mid April.**



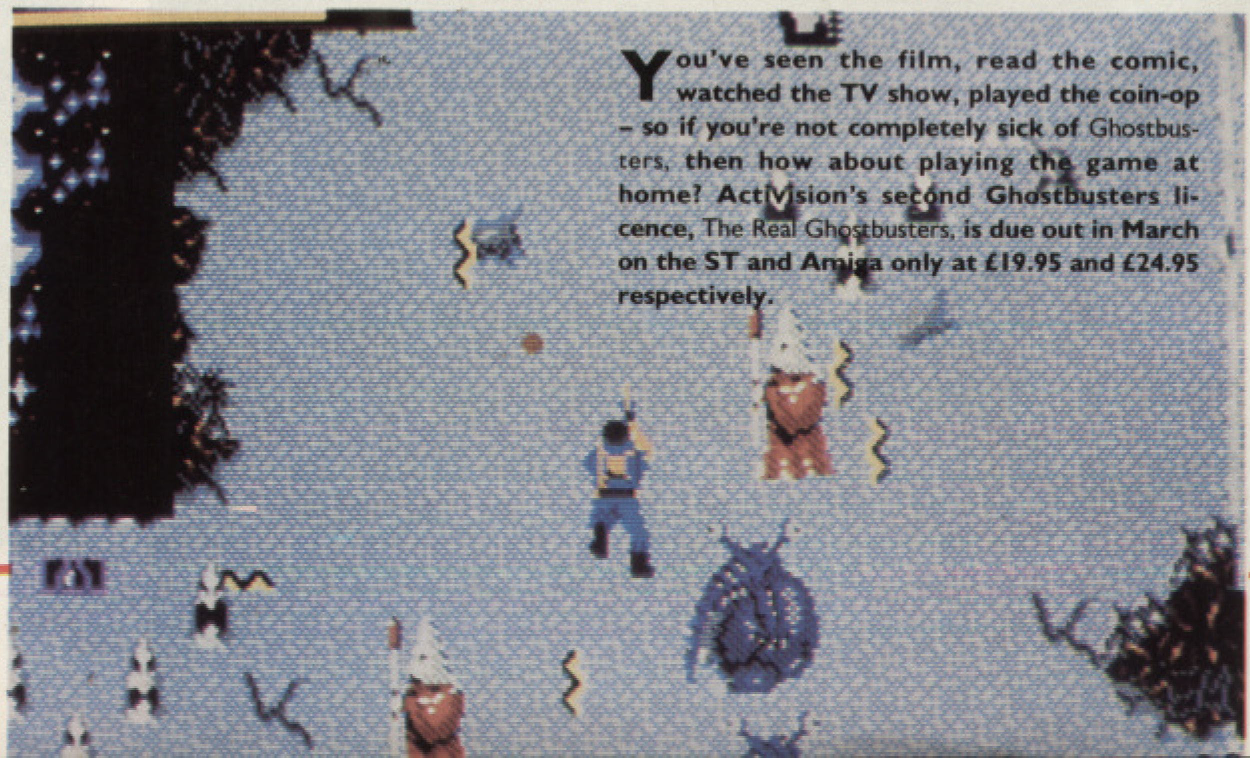
HAVE A BALL

ANYBODY fancy a ball game where all you have to do is score more goals than your opponent? If that sounds too easy, then add a few magnets to change the ball's path, a splitter which turns one ball into loads, bumpers to bamboozal you, hoovers to suck you in and blowers to throw you back out – and you end up with **Ballistix,** the next product due from Psygnosis.

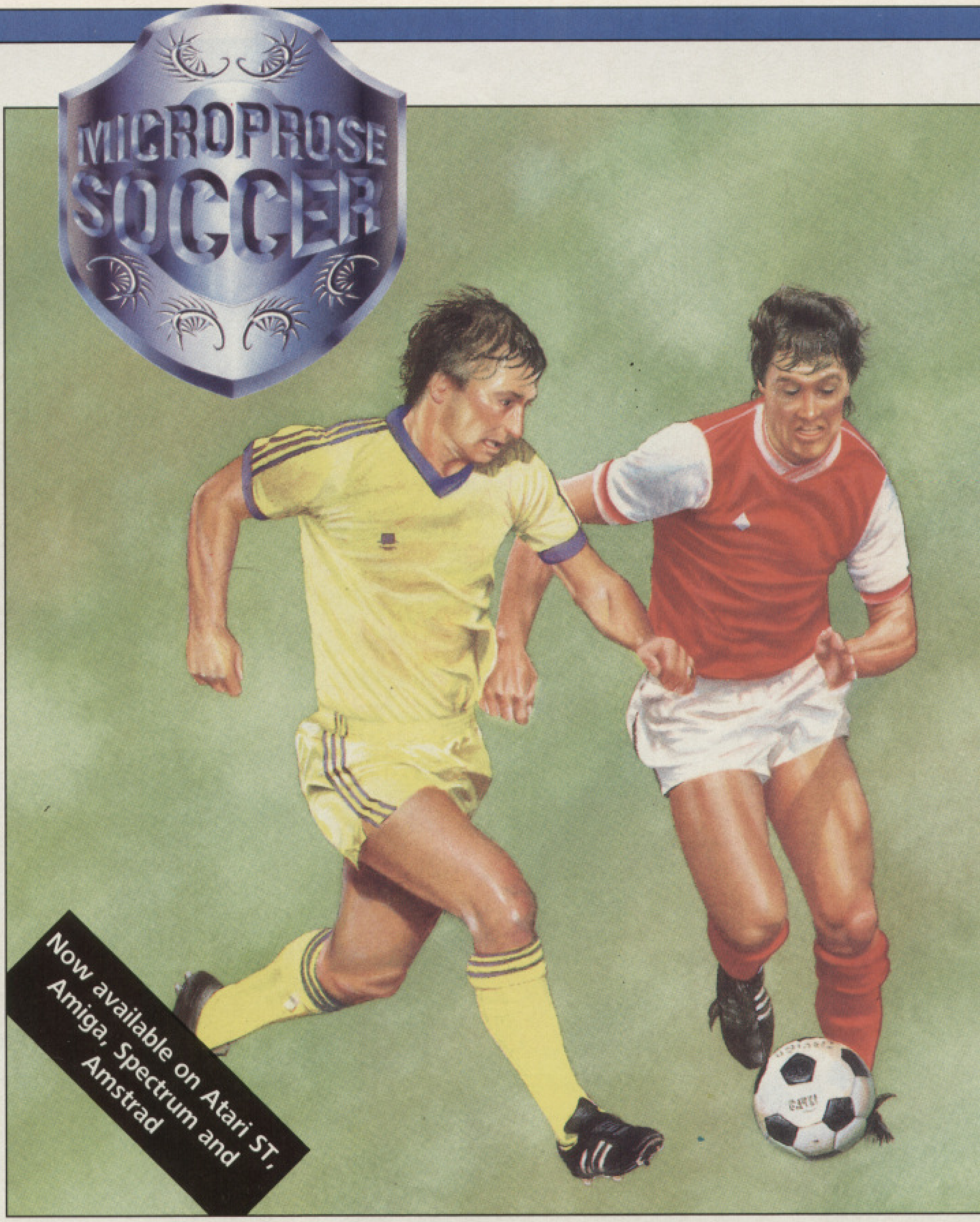
Played out over 130 pitches, and allowing control of everything from ball speed to number of players, **Ballistix** looks as though it could rival **Speedball** in the addiction stakes. ST and Amiga owners should just about be able to get their hands on this at a price of £19.95. PC details are as yet unavailable.



What a lot of balls! And doesn't that background look a bit familiar . . .



You've seen the film, read the comic, watched the TV show, played the coin-op – so if you're not completely sick of Ghostbusters, **then how about playing the game at home? Activision's second Ghostbusters licence,** The Real Ghostbusters, **is due out in March on the ST and Amiga only at £19.95 and £24.95 respectively.**



WHAT'S THE SCORE?

It's fun, fast, exciting and addictive. MicroProse Soccer keeps you on your toes, however often you play.

Challenge the computer or a friend, competing in the World Cup, International Challenge or the indoor league.

An overhead perspective of the pitch makes it easy to play good graphics and sound effects make every match seem real.

Fully animated players can perform a whole variety of movements, including overhead and banana kicks. There are 29 different teams and a unique action-replay facility.

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Atari ST £24.95. Amiga £24.95. Spectrum Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95. Amstrad Cassette £14.95, Disk £19.95. **GAME OF THE MONTH — C&VG**

MICRO PROSE

SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

MicroProse, 2 Market Place, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA. Tel: 0666 54326







Have you ever wondered exactly what goes in to squeezing a byte-guzzling arcade game into your home computer? Gary Penn returns from ace programming team Graftgold with armfuls of technical data on the conversion of Taito's Rainbow Islands **for Firebird.**

You'd be surprised just how much work goes into producing games ... or maybe you wouldn't. But what is surprising is that after only three months of converting **Rainbow Islands** to the ST and Amiga, Graftgold has already put in over one year of man hours.

Andrew Braybrook is the man most actively involved with the conversion. His 8-bit work is widely known and admired and arguably unmatched. Innovation is his forte, and he has a string of original products to his name.

Andrew's games programming life began at Hewson. The cutesy antics of **Gribbly's Day Out** got Andrew noticed and the as-yet-unsurpassed atmospheric shoot 'em up action of **Paradroid** provided ample reinforcement. But it was his silky smooth horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, **Uridium,** that really put him on the map ... and the equally silky-smooth but unfortunately flawed vertically scrolling shoot 'em up **AlleyKat** which almost took him off it.

The Hewson connection was severed amidst controversy surrounding the 'thinking man's shoot 'em up, **Morpheus,** which eventually saw the light of day through Firebird. Andrew's last 8-bit project was a 'shoot 'em up without shooting' – **Intensity.**

Rainbow Islands is something of a departure for Andrew, marking his 16-bit debut and his first unoriginal product.

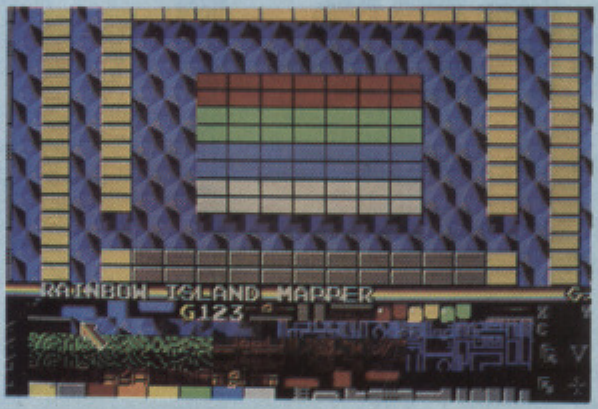
"It's been educational. It's provided me with the opportunity to learn about the 16-bit machines without the risk of producing an original game, and I've also learned a lot about how arcade games work. The Japanese seem to excel at producing good, solid game concepts. I like the fact that everything about their games rarely looks or feels out of place.

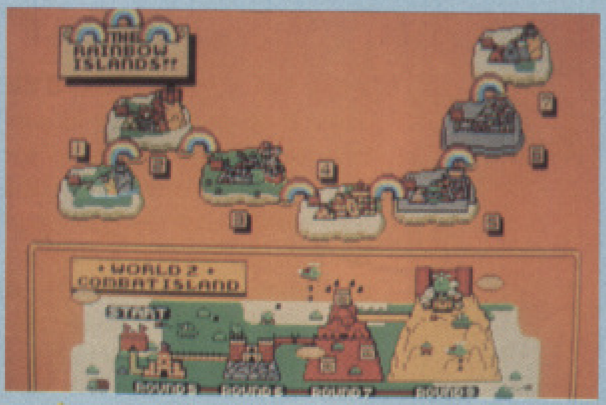
"The **Rainbow Islands'** design is quite clever. It's fairly bog-standard looking on the surface, but the way you can interact with the rainbows is clever, particularly the many different ways of using them. You can climb them, use them to trap and dispose of the creatures, reveal and collect hidden items and so on.

"With this conversion we set out to recreate the feel of the original as this is the most important aspect of any game."

Andrew's using two ST's – one for development and the other to test his work. He writes the program on a 1040 ST with a black and white hi-res display as it's a lot easier on the eyes. For test purposes, the program is then saved to disk so

Rainbow Island features plenty of Taito in-jokes – like the Arkanoid island, a screen of which is shown here on John's map editor. All sound effects on this level change to those heard in the Arkanoid game.

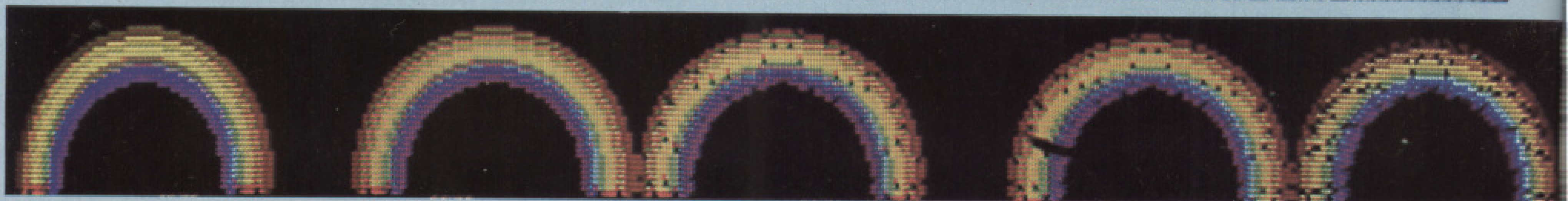




The seven islands are split into four vertically scrolling rounds of increasing difficulty with 16 different creatures on each.

Get to the top of the round before the island sinks and a bonus is yours. At the top of the fourth round there's a large creature to dispose of – seen here is Level One's, a big spider.





RK IN PROGRESS







John Cumming's Rainbow Island Mapper, written on STOS. Note the building blocks at the bottom of the screen, used to create complete islands. Despite being provided with most of the original graphics, John eventually drew roughly 50% of the backgrounds himself, using photographs and a video recording of the complete game for reference.

Andrew can load it into a 1040 ST and view his works on a colour monitor.

"I'm actually writing **Rainbow** on the Tempus Editor with Hisoft's Assembler and the Metacomco Linker. The Hisoft Monitor allows me to load, look at and run the code on the test machine."

The ST's not exactly renowned for smooth scrolling, but **Rainbow Islands** manages quite nicely thank you. Dominic Robinson is responsible. He's been working on the ST for over a year, tinkering with Fractals and some 3D work. Before this he converted **Uridium** to the Spectrum, and so had a lot more experience of dealings with the 'impossible'.

THE COIN-OP

Once again you take control of either Bub or Bob, who were both turned human at the end of **Bubble Bobble.** The pair's chums have been imprisoned and it's up to them to save them – by battling through seven islands to collect the seven coloured gems.

Instead of firing bubbles, the boys fire rainbows. There are 64 Special Items to collect along the way, and provided you can find them, you can increase the quantity of rainbows you fire (from one up to three), and the speed at which you fire them.

Like its predecessor, there are secret points bonuses to be earned and secret islands to discover – a bit like the hidden rooms in **Bubble Bobble.**

"It's smoothly scrolling 21 lines of the screen in 16 colours, and running at 25 frames per second most of the time, allowing for up to 60 sprites on screen at once. At a push it can just manage about 50 frames a second.

"Our biggest problem so far has been keeping up the 'frame rate' – the speed at which the game runs. The rainbows are actually built into the scenery as characters rather than sprites, which means replotting the background – the best part of 28K – every refresh. Otherwise there'd be chunks of rainbow all over the place.

"The machine's Operating System takes up valuable memory and has routines we don't need, so Dominic has written his own multi-tasking Operating System. This meant I could write a mini-language of my own to run the game's mechanics, like movement patterns, collision detection, and . . . and more besides.

"Dominic's currently making his Operating System Amiga compatible so we can use it along with some original ST code. Until writing solely for the Amiga becomes commercially viable, its games will have to look like those on the ST. We will make full use of the Amiga's Blitter chip, as it's capable of performing certain functions very quickly, so the Amiga version should run smoother and faster.

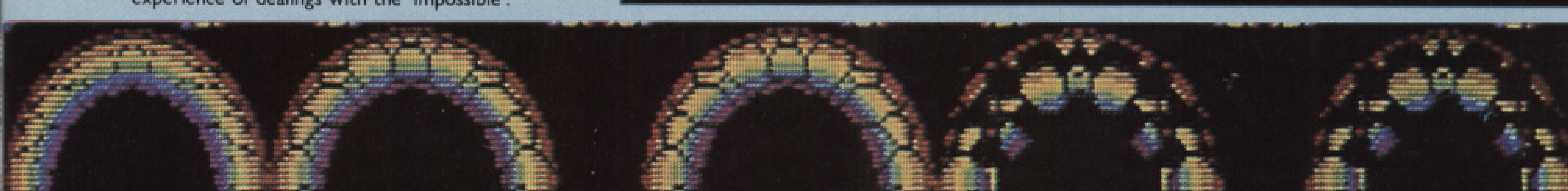
"We could product a slightly slower 32 colour version on the Amiga, but this would involve major code optimisation. All the graphics would have to be done from scratch, and so would most of the programming."

The ST version of **Rainbow Islands** will take up at least two disks – and with the quantity of graphics alone, you can understand why. The Amiga version on the other hand, should squeeze onto a single disk.

This is a common occurrence, the reason being that apart from being able to read both sides of a disk, the Amiga disk drive has a variable speed facility, so by slowing down the speed at which the disks spins, you can fit more on as there's less distance between the data. It's a bit like 12" records and LP's – the ST can only play 78's, whereas the Amiga has a multi-speed deck.

There are 28 sprite animation frames for Bub, including walking, jumping, falling and death sequences.





GRAPHICS

The Graftgold boys reckon that there's a staggering 2Mb or so of graphics in the coin-op, with even some of the least important adversaries requiring up to 32 frames of animation. Obviously there's no way Andrew could fit all of this into an ST or Amiga, so he had to devise a way of squeezing as much in as possible.

One of the most effective ways of storing background graphics is to create fundamental building blocks (characters) and make 'maps' of the levels – rather than store complete 'pictures'. And as the game design would have it, the four rounds of each island have the same theme, background graphics and creatures, so they can be stored as whole islands, instead of individual levels, and thus effectively built when necessary.

Using Mandarin's **STOS,** Graftgold's graphics artist, John Cummings, wrote a utility to enable him to carry out this task, and Andrew provided some machine code additions to speed things up where necessary.

"We used **STOS** because it's a good implementation of BASIC. It's fast enough, with a good editor and plenty of functions," says John.

But when one island contains over 4,000 characters, with each character taking up 32 bytes – that's around 125K – a means of further condensing the scenery is needed. So the boys wrote a routine to crunch things further.

But you need something to work with in the first place, and two million characters would take months to draw ... Fortunately Taito supplied most of the graphics on three 3½" PC disks – and all in IFF form, a standard International File Format designed for the Amiga by Commodore and Electronic Arts.

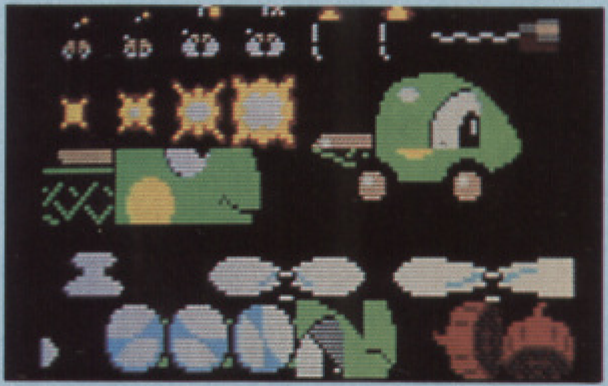
As fate would have it, the ST can read PC format disks, so Graftgold's graphic artist, John Cummings, wrote an IFF interpreter using **STOS.** The graphics and original colours were then read into the ST, and then converted into **Neochrome** picture format.

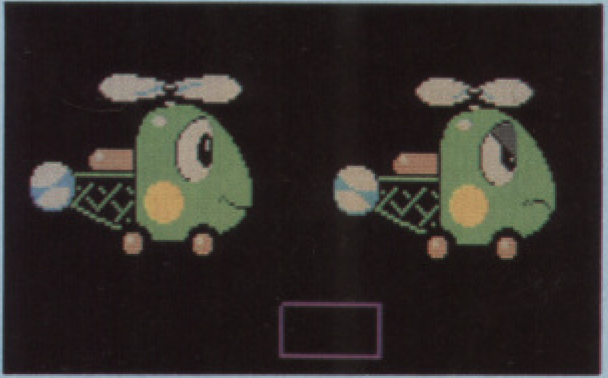
The graphics provided probably came from the designer, as some sprites simply weren't present and so had to be drawn from scratch. There were also some extra frames of animation, such as Bub 'surfing' over the rainbows instead of merely walking. More amusing though, is a sequence where Bub takes all his clothes off and changes into a Superman outfit!

Restricted to 16 colours, the boys decided on a basic palette that would closely match the coin-op's original colours. Rainbird's **Art Studio** was then used to put the graphics into brush (sprite) format.

"It took a while to get the basic palette right," says John, "obviously we had to have the seven rainbow colours, but the other nine took some time, especially the 16th." John has to override his program though when his routine chose what it thought the best match for a colour and it was too close to an existing colour.

It wasn't all plain sailing on the graphics front ... Taito's original sprites were stored in slices, almost like a jigsaw. This is before John got to work, rearranging the slices and determining which bits were which.





SOUND

There's not a lot to it, just a few twinkly spot effects and some cutesy FM-sounding jingles. Taito provided 40 sheets of scruffily written music which is virtually unintelligible – especially with the Japanese notations. Steve Turner is currently listening closely to the coin-op and working on ways and means of coaxing the right sounds out of the 16-bit machines.

GAMEPLAY

Graftgold's resident arcade champ and Spectrum programmer David O'Connor has spent the most time playing **Rainbow Islands** and so knows the way it plays and feels almost inside out. Subsequently, David playtests every routine.

The boys spent a couple of hours videoing the game through to the end for reference, with John finding it especially invaluable as it meant he could study the backgrounds and determine map arrangements.

"We have to sit down and analyse the way creatures move and so on and try to recreate this. Taito provided a large booklet with the original game design rather than programming notes, so although we know who fires what and at what speed things move, most of the information isn't that relevant to the arcade game as we know it."

Great Compression Techniques of Our Time
Or: How Graftgold Managed To Squeeze A Quart Into a Pint Pot

"None of the backgrounds had been compressed so we had to write our own compression routines. This took us a fortnight. The maps are now down to 20% of their original size.

"There are basically characters you can walk on and those you can't, so the original idea for efficiency was to separate the foreground from the background, produce two compacted maps and drop the one on top of the other. Surprisingly, simply compacting the complete level worked out far more efficient than we thought.

"The four rounds of each island have the same theme, backgrounds and creatures, so we compress them all together as islands rather than individual levels. It takes up to half an hour to compact data, but only a second at most to decompact."

The program searches through the map for duplicates, replacing them with single numbers. It repeats this process until no further duplicates are found. For example, taking a horizontal strip of the map...

0000000000**1234**000000000000**1234**000000000000

The zeros represent blank spaces. Here we have two common groups of characters: 12 and 34. So we can replace the two numbers with one and thus take up less space. Characters 1 and 2 become say, 101, and 3 and 4 become 102. Now the program knows to replace 101 with characters 1 and 2 and 102 with 3 and 4.

Scanning the line a second time we find another common pair – 101102 and 101102, so we can replace these two numbers with a single number – 103. Thus the map becomes...

0000000000**103**000000000000**103**0000000000

These numbers are called macros.

This process can also be performed vertically, so large rectangular characters can be formed. Thus a cloud can be represented as one number.

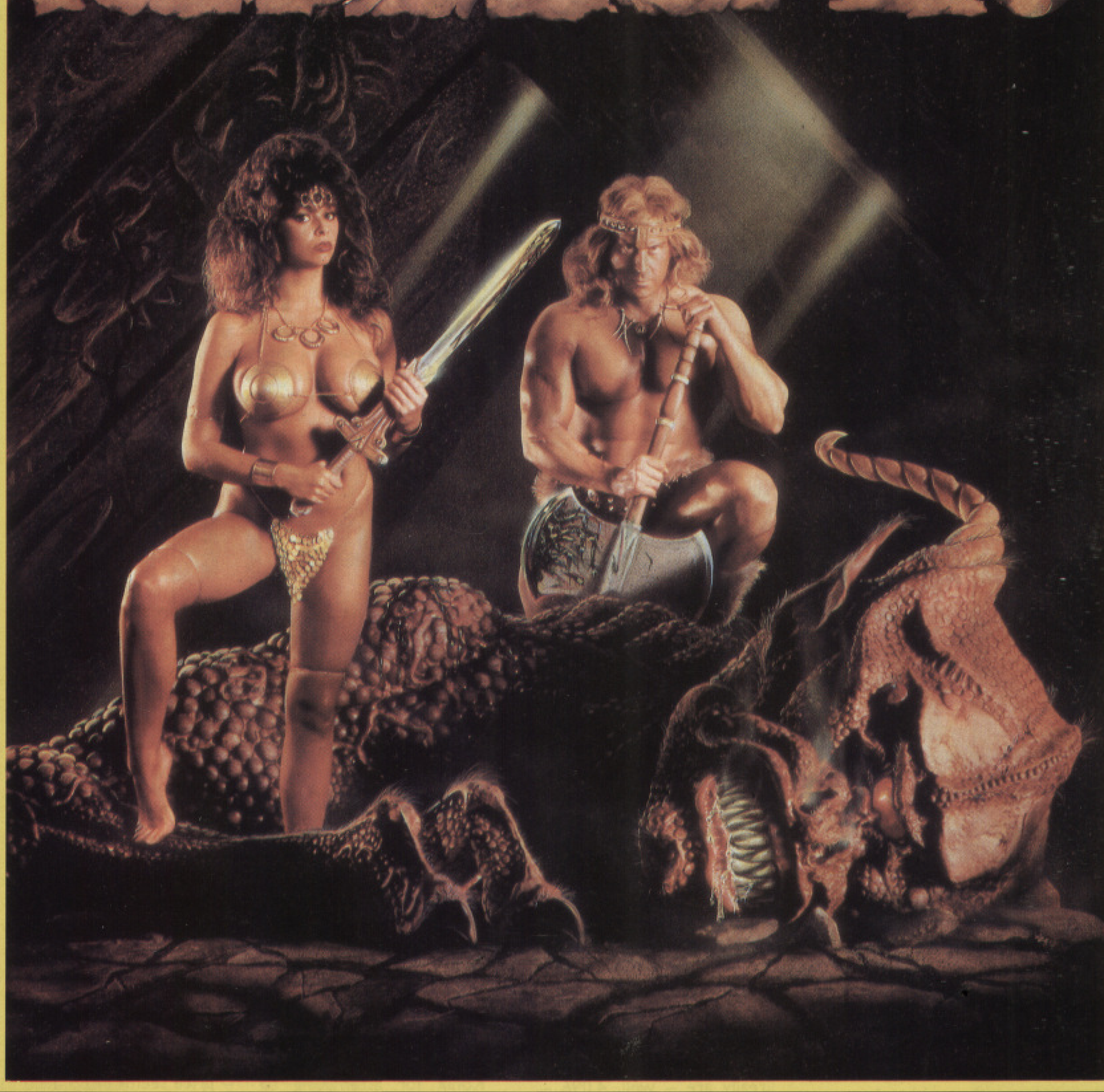
All spaces are removed by Run-Length Encoding Using A Binary Tree Structure. This means that when decompressing we test the first bit. If it's equal to zero, then we know that spaces follow, so we get the next eight bits and insert this number of spaces.

However, if the first bit is equal to one, then we test the next bit. If this equals zero than we get the next eight bits and insert the character in question. If it's equal to one, then we get the next 11 bits and expand the macro.

The macro definitions are stored in a table which is also bit streamed to save space, ie; all macros are 11 bits long, so the sets of 11 bits are placed sequentially in memory.



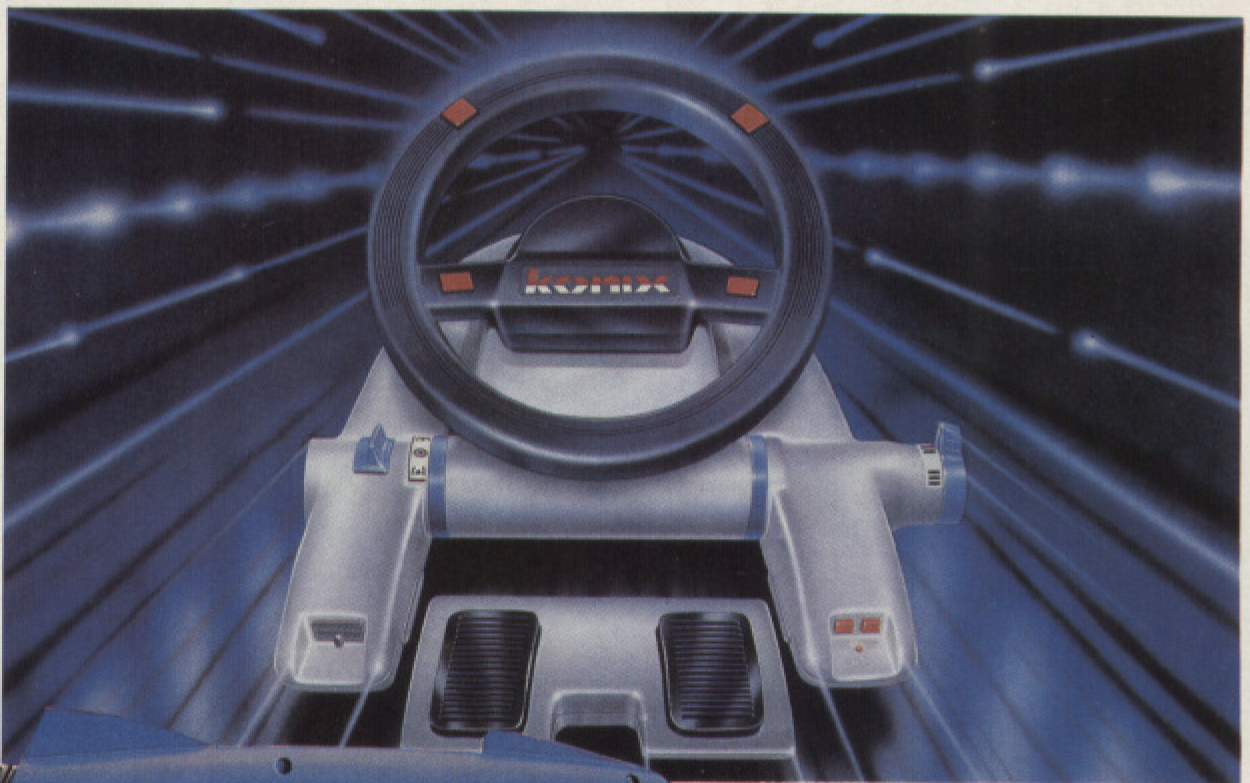
The Graftgold team: Andrew Braybrook (main programmer of Rainbow), Dominic Robinson (technical support), John Cummings (graphics), David O'Connor (gameplay tester), Steve Turner (sound).




BARBARIAN II


BARBARIAN II


BARBARIAN II







Transformers – Consoles In Disguise ... The Konix Multi-System console in all its glory. Is the horseshoe the shape of things to come? The switch to the far right of the machine is a 'gear stick'. At the back end of the donkey there's an eight-way DIN socket, a 56-way PCB cartridge port, a 13-way DIN video in/out port and a 3.5 mm stereo audio out hole.



BETTER THAN REALITY?

Wow, it's the light gun with recoil action. Clip on a hand grip and butt and it's a rifle, and with a flich of an auto fire switch you've got a machine gun at your disposal.



Wow times two. It's the Power Chair. Konix has provisionally priced it at £149 (sounds cheap). Sit down and take the wieght off your plates, strap yourself in, clip on the console and mount your monitor or portable telly. Now when you twist and turn and squirm, the chair moves too! Coo, just like Space Harrier **or** OutRun **– almost. Optional extras include a stylish panels, stereo speakers and a helicopter handle. Could it be interfaced with your favourite home computer? There are mumbles of it being possible, but surely not with Konix's consent ...**

MOVE OVER Matel – you may have cornered the market with your transforming toys, but it looks like Konix is going to be first tiwh the transforming console. With a deft flick of the wrist, the Multi-System changes from a motorbike to a light aircraft to a car to Optimus Prime to ...

The console, which is due to appear in August, comes complete with a steering wheel attachment and pedal set. It's architecture is similar to that of a high-end PC, so it's a pretty nippy little beggar. The Multi-System features CD-quality sound, more colours than there really are – well, 4,096 – 128K on-board memory and a 3½" disk drive. And all for £199.

Just listen to all this yummy technical speil ...
PCB ... 8036 running at 6MHz ... custom ASIC at 12MHz ... four hardware sprite planes ... OSP with 16 x 16 multiplier/accumulator ... 12 MIPS burst rate ... on-chip cache memory, 32 bits wide ... Blitter chip ... two 14 bit D/A converters ...

Konix seems to have the support of most major software pulbishers, US Gold and Ocean included, and it reckons there will be 15 games ready for the console's launch with 40 by the end of the year. The price? £14.99 a piece.

And there's more ... Konix is promising some nifty thrifty add-ons, such as a light gun with recoil action, a keypad and, best of all, a motorised comfy chair! But will it sell?

The hardware is radically different – full marks to Konix for attempting to keep British business alive. But it's debatable whether innovative hardware is enough. Konix's demonstration at the Toy Fair at Earls Court last month was lacking suitable software support. A lack of development time was apparently the problem, but the game demos running were, to be blunt, unremarkable.

Programmers don't yet seem to have got to grips with existing 16-bit technology, so what hope of packing as much as possible in 880K? It sounds a lot, sure. But when you consider how much compacted graphics data went into, say, Graftgold's conversion of **Rainbow Islands,** it suddenly becomes apparent that there's little room for any gameplay. So will we get less thrills or more disks and expenditure?

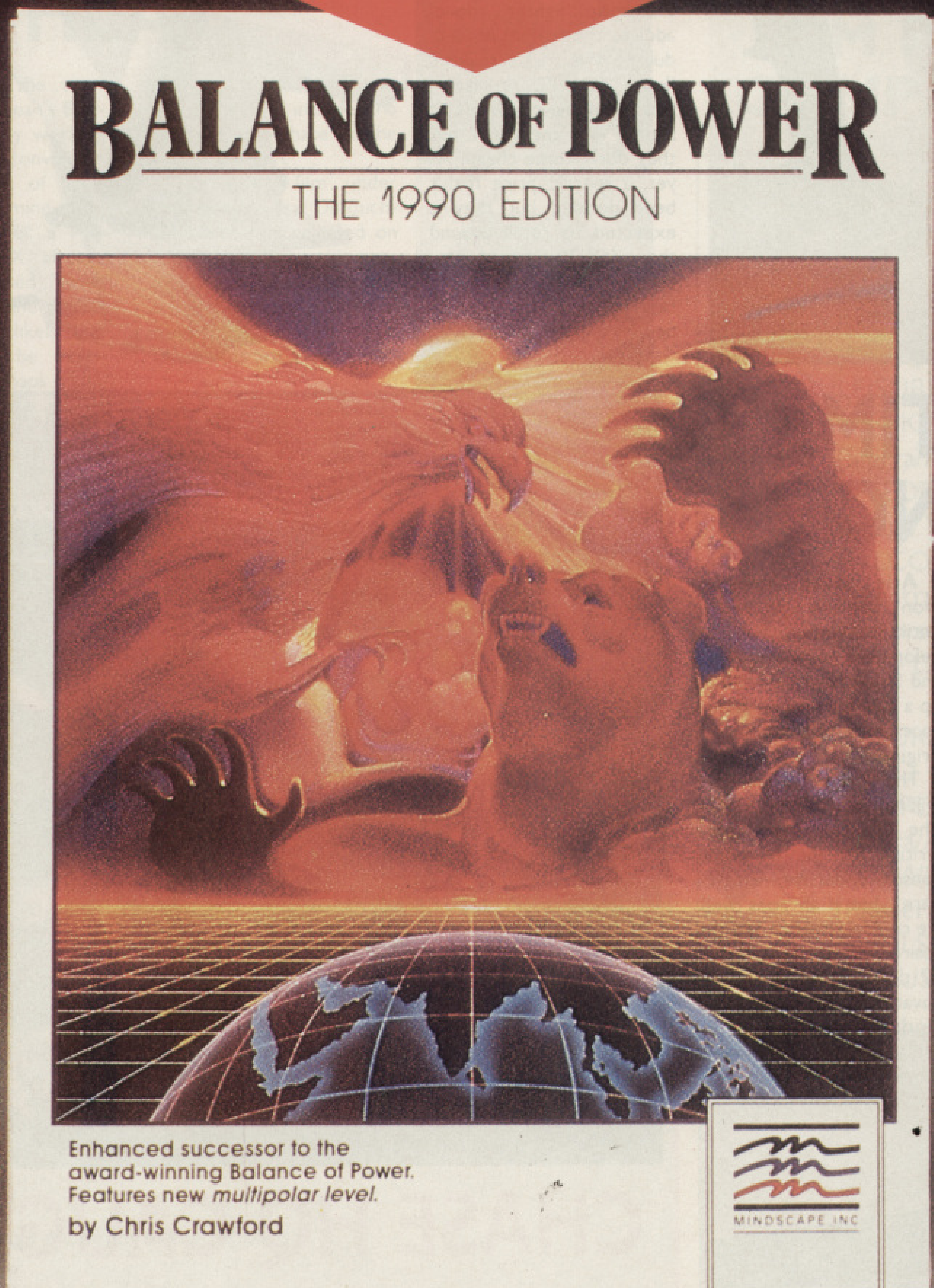
Konix promises a lot, but all this power at such a low price seems just a little too good to be true ... roll on August.



ABOUT TIME!
WAIT TILL YOU EXPERIENCE...

BALANCE OF POWER

THE 1990 EDITION



- The ultimate simulation of global leadership in a nuclear age.
- Assume the role of either the President of the USA or the General Secretary of the USSR.
- An unparalleled real world simulation. Simulates real world political interaction among 80 countries (formerly 62).
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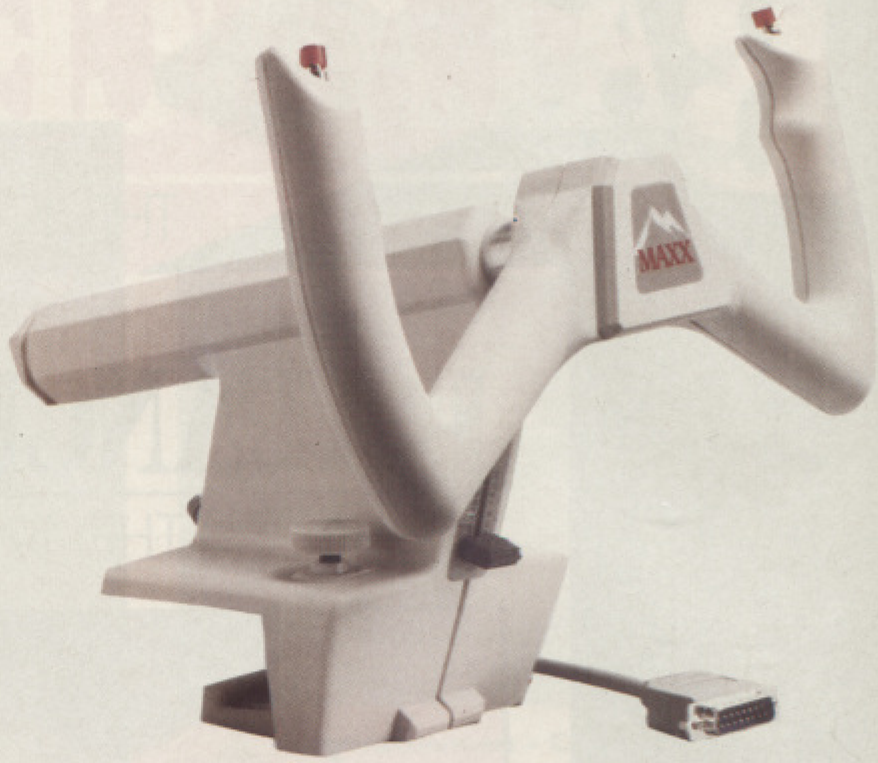
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THE YOKE'S ON YOU





TWO NEW specialist joysticks, designed in the US specifically for simulation software such as **Jetfighter** and **F-19** have been released on this side of the water. There's a standard model that replicates the 'sticks found in US fighter planes and a 'yoke' which is more akin to those found in light aircraft. Both are designed to look and feel like the 'real thing' – and they do.

Playing **Jetfighter** (reviewed this month) with the basic 'fighter' model adds to the realism no end, due to the stick's realistic 'loose' feel. PC simulation fans should have a whale of a time with the sticks, but they don't come cheap. As yet, a specific price hasn't been decided but they're expected to retail around the £60-70 mark! Interested? For further details give Software Circus a bell on 01-436 2811.

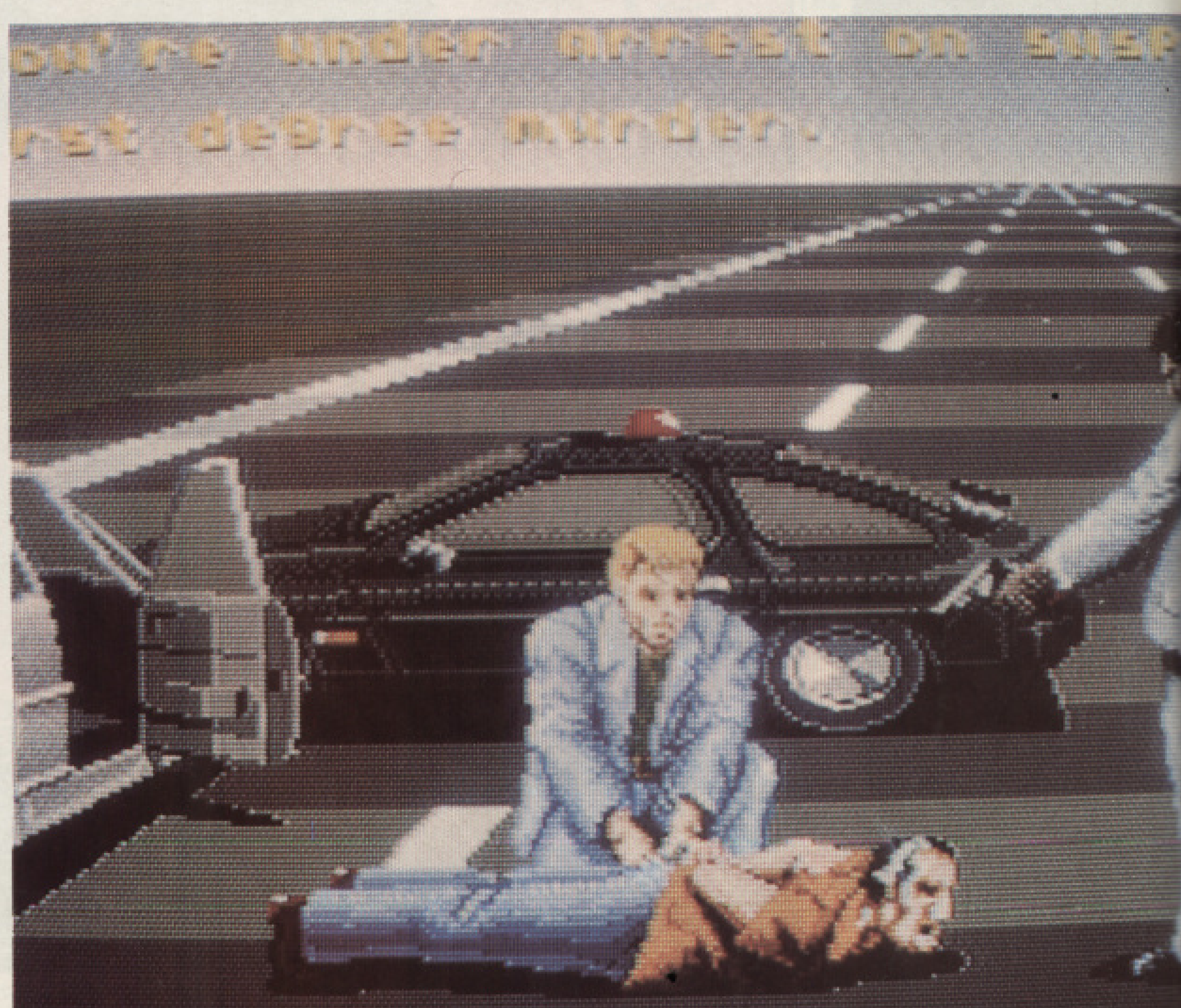
THE ULTIMATE LICENCE

NEWLY-formed Krisalis (formerly Chrysalis) has just signed a deal with the legendary 8-bit software house Ultimate to convert all its old titles (and there are a lot!) to the ST, Amiga and PC. The classic arcade adventures **Sabre Wulf** and **Atic Atac** are the first to be converted.

Shaun Hollingworth and Peter Harrap, the duo which handled the conversions of **Pac-Mania** and lent a hand with **Blasteroids,** are in charge of the conversions, and are hoping to have **Sabre Wulf** finished in time for a May release.

Atic Atac however, won't see the light of day until September. For development purposes, Peter and Shaun have even linked up a Spectrum to an Amiga to capture the feel of the originals!

The finished conversions will have to be approved by The Ultimate team (now writing for the Nintendo console under the name of Rare), but if all goes well, we could expect to see the entire Ulitmate range (over 20 titles, including the innovative **Knight Lore** and **Underwurlde**) on ST, Amiga and PC in the not-too distant future!





CHASE HQ CAUGHT?

AMID much speculation as the licensing of Taito's brilliant race'n'ram coin-op **Chase HQ,** it looks like the software house behind the wheel is Ocean.

An Ocean spokesman refused to confirm or deny the rumour, but sources suggest it has the conversion rights. The majority of Taito's coin-ops, such as **Rastan, Slap Fight, Arkanoid, Operation Wolf** and **Renegade,** have all been snapped up by the Manchester moneybags in the past, so it's unlikely that **Chase HQ** will be an exception.

The only other companiess who could be in the running for such a big licence are Activision (who say they've definitely not signed it up) and US Gold, who have not had any licence deals with Taito in the past. Confirmation will follow when we have it.

SPECIAL FX TAKES THE HEAT



SPECIAL FX, the team resonsible for Ocean's **Batman,** is currently working on two new conversion projects – both of films. **Red Heat** is coming along nicely in time for a May release and SFX already have a pixellated Arnie cavorting about the streets of Chicago. It's likely that the game will be multi-section (and perhaps multi-load) and SFX's Paul Finnegan hopes to include the dramatic bus chase at the end of the film.

The other film under conversion is The Untouchables, recently released on video. Details on this project are vague as the game is in the very early stages of development, but plenty of shoot outs are a certainty.

COMPETITION

WIN A LAUNCH



SO you want to try your hand a space exploration, eh? Well now's your chance. Activision has given us two tickets to ride on Starship 3001, a huge 40-seater hydraulic spaceship simulator which makes Sega's hydraulic systems and even the might Super-X seen at last year's PC show seem lame!

The simulator incorporates the same hydraulic technology used in the British Airways airliner simulators used to train their pilots. And if this isn't enough, the lucky pair will each receive a copy of **Millennium 2.2** too. Ten runners-up can have a copy of **Millennium 2.2** each.

Send your completed entries to: Lunar Laffs, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU to arrive by March 28th, Millennium 1.989. The first two completely correct entries get the tickets and a copy of **Millennium 2.2** each.

1. How many moon landings have there been in the NASA Apollo programme?
A 6
B 7
C 8
D 9

2. The average diameter of the moon is ...
A 3,729 km
B 3,312 km
C 3,473 km
D 4,126 km

3. What was the name of NASA's first lauched space shuttle?
A Columbia
B Enterprise
C Challenger
D Discovery

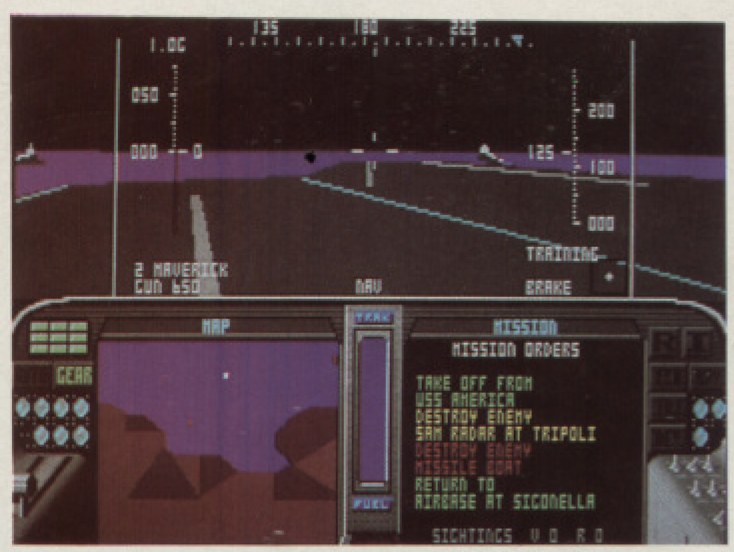
NAME ....
ADDRESS ....
....
I OWN ... (TICK ONE)
☐ ATARI ST ☐ AMIGA ☐ PC

TOP TEN

(Month Ending February '89)

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

Pos	Last	Title
1	2	FLIGHT SIMULATOR III (SubLogic)
2	5	KINGS QUEST TRIPLE PACK (Sierra)
2	1	F19 STEALTH FIGHTER (Microprose)
2	3	LEISURE SUIT LARRY GOES LOOKING FOR LOVE (Sierra/Activision)
5	NE	SPEEDBALL (Image Works)
6	NE	FALCON (Spectrum HoloByte/ Mirrorsoft)
7	RE	TEST DRIVE
8	RE	LEISURE SUIT LARRY IN THE LAND OF THE LOUNGE LIZARDS (Sierra/Activision)
9	NE	SIDEWINDER (Mastertronic)
10	NE	POOLS OF RADIANCE (SST/US Gold)



F19: **down but not out.**

Compiled exclusively for The One by SOFTWARE CIRCUS LTD, The Plaza On Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON W1N 9DF. Tel: 01 436 2811.

DEBUGGERY

MIRRORSOFT'S Image Works label has two interesting titles in development. The first, seen here, is **Dynamic Debugger,** due for release around April on ST, Amiga and PC. It's a stomp 'n' search 'n' survive affair which sees you battling through ten worlds, each comprising between 10-15 scenes which are a dozen or so screens in length.



Each world has a theme and associated weapon, for example, World One is set in a garden (no trees) with you disposing of beetles, spiders and the like with a DDT gun. World Two is drink orientated, with a cork-shooting champagne bottle used to fend off pink elephants – among other things.

Newly-formed programming team Interactive Pixels is promising great things of the 16-bit machines. Jon Knox, Andy Reece and Alan Witherhew are the Byte Boys, and Pete Lyon is providing the pixels – arguably his best-constructed yet.

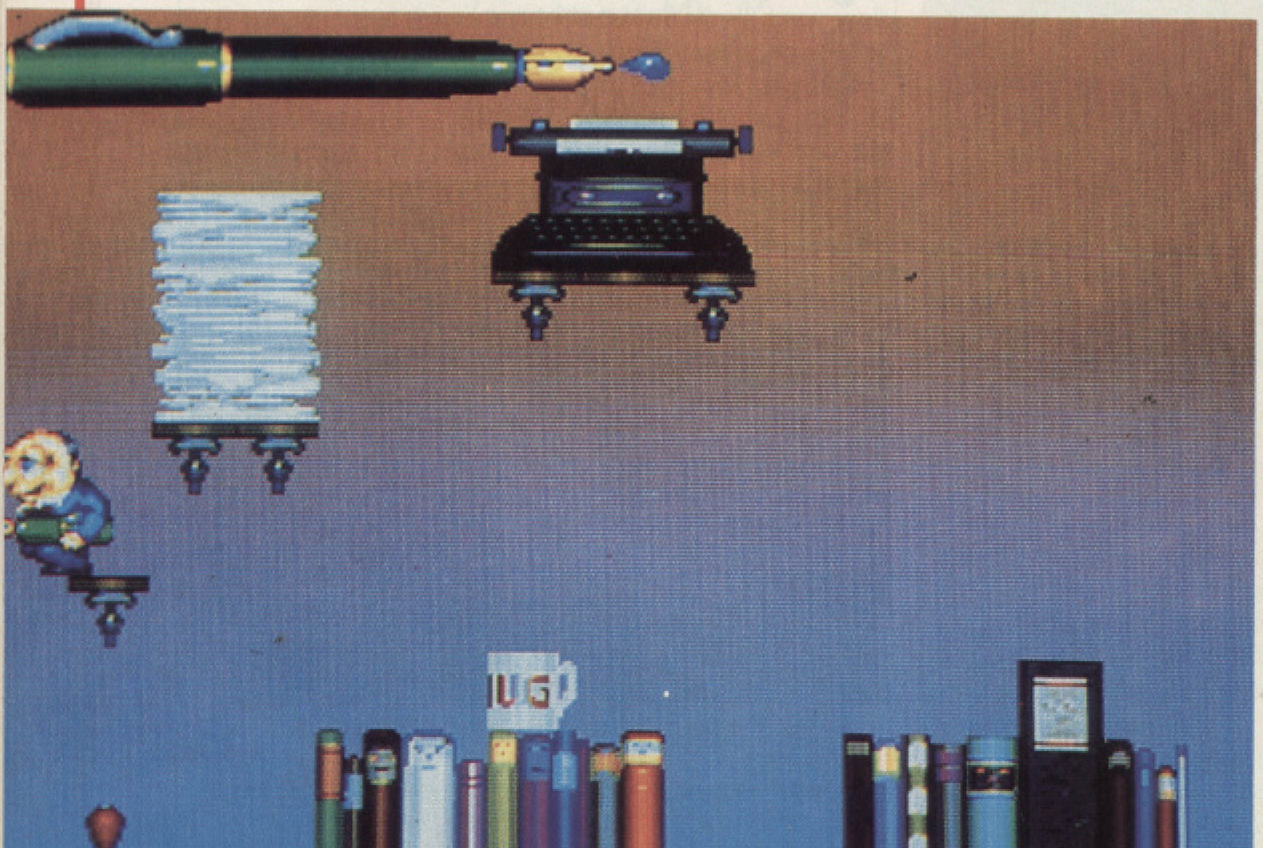
The Amiga version, claims Jon, is the first smooth bi-directional horizontally scrolling HAM game to appear (Mandarin's much-publicised **Pioneer Plague** only featured static HAM screens), with horizontal overscan for good measure. All sprites are software driven (which means they are effectively part of the scenery which is continually updated) so they can have lots of colours too. The ST version is smoothly scrolling almost a full screen with more than 32 colours, while the PC is being supported with CGA, EGA and VGA versions.

Technical achievements aside, **Dynamic Debugger** is looking stunning.

The other Image Works' project is less certain, but there's more to it than meets the eye. Anyone who saw Signals on Channel 4 at the end of Janaury will have seen the Bitmap Brothers in all their glory, complete with an interesting looking demo of what could be their next game. A spokesman for Mirrorsoft and the Bitmaps' Eric Matthews refused to confirm or deny that this will be the Bros' next project, potentially the pseudo sequel to **Xenon.**

"We're playing around with a really nice idea," admitted Eric. "But that's all I'll say for the moment. The demo was a little something we knocked up – loads of parallax and sprites. Will we take it any further? Who knows . . ."

We do, and so will you – next month.

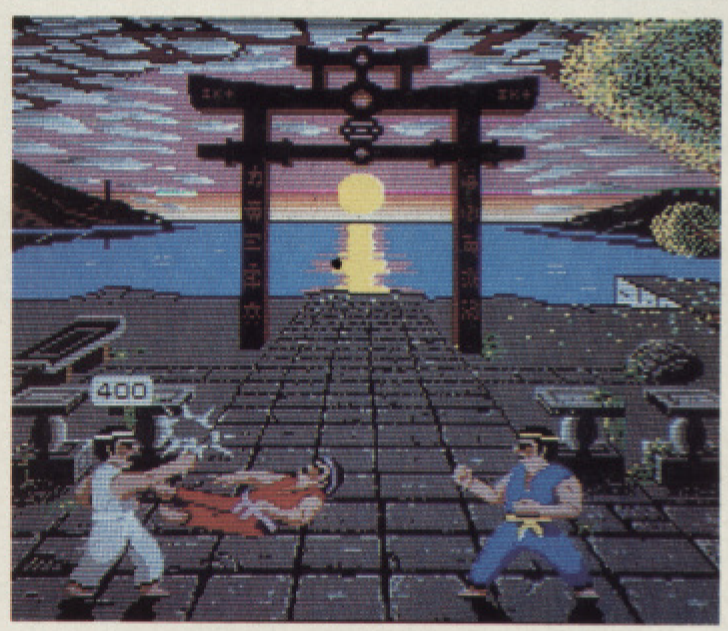


TOP TEN

(Month Ending February '89)

ATARI ST

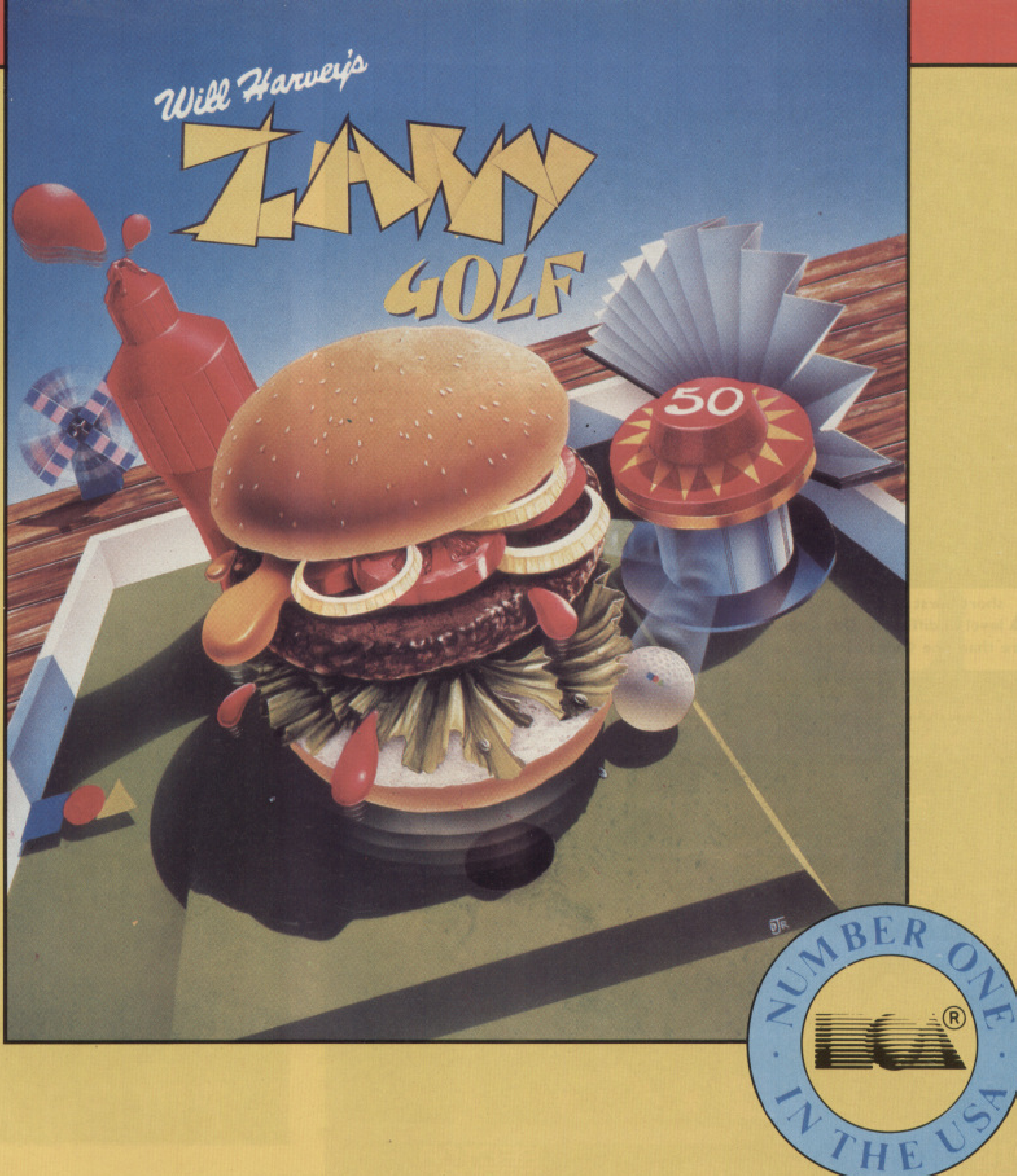
1	1	FALCON (Spectrum HoloByte/Mirrorsoft)
2	3	SPEEDBALL (Image Works)
3	6	DUNGEON MASTER (FTL/Mirrorsoft)
4	RE	EMPIRE (Interstel/Electronic Arts)
5	NE	LEISURE SUIT LARRY GOES LOOKING FOR LOVE (Sierra/Activision)
6	NE	INTERNATIONAL KARATE + (System 3)
7	RE	LEISURE SUIT LARRY IN THE LAND OF THE LOUNGE LIZARDS (Sierra/Activision)
8	NE	SKRULL (Action)
9	NE	MANHUNTER NEW YORK (Sierra/Activision)
10	4	LOMBARD RAC RALLY (Mandarin)



IK+: **beating off the opposition.**

Compiled exclusively for The One by SOFTWARE CIRCUS LTD, The Plaza On Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON WIN 9DP. Tel: 01 436 2811.

AMIGA



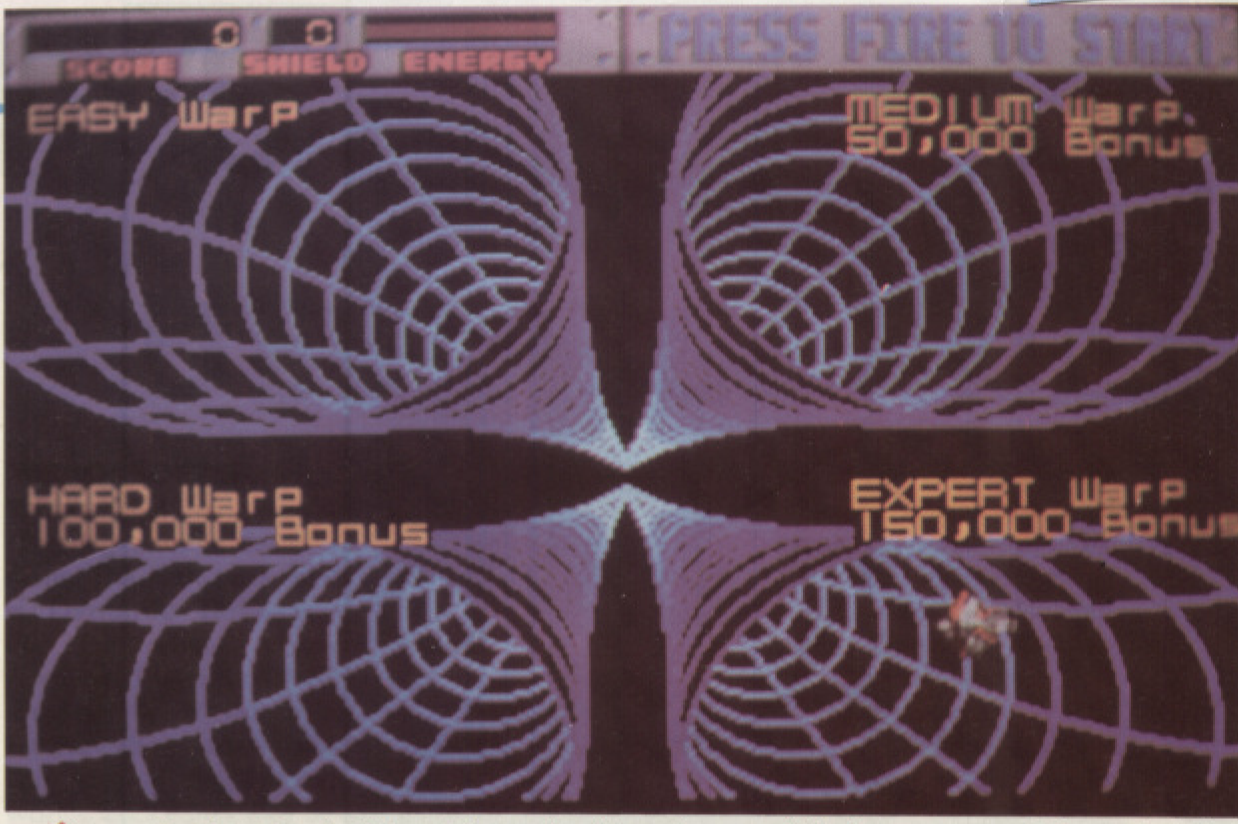
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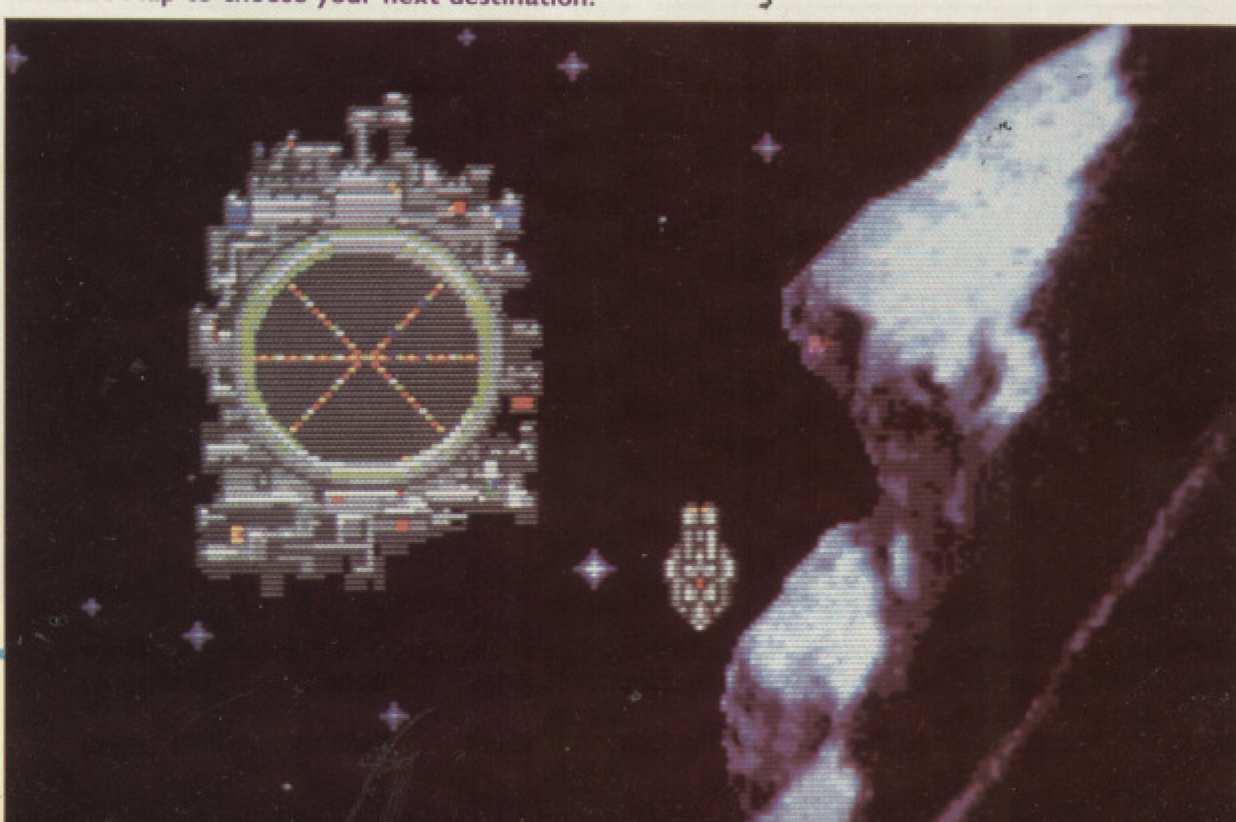


A short burst of thrust is required to enter one of the four warps and thus select the level of difficulty. Depending on your choice, there are either nine or 16 sectors to clear and more than one Galaxy in each warp...



Move from sector to sector by using the Galactic Map. Adjacent unexplored sectors feature representations of what you can expect to meet. Sectors hidden behind question marks represent unexplored sectors currently outside of your ship's range.

Dispose of everthing that moves and a portal appears, pulling any debris towards it – including your ship. No need to worry though – you only get transported as far as the Galactic Map to choose your next destination.

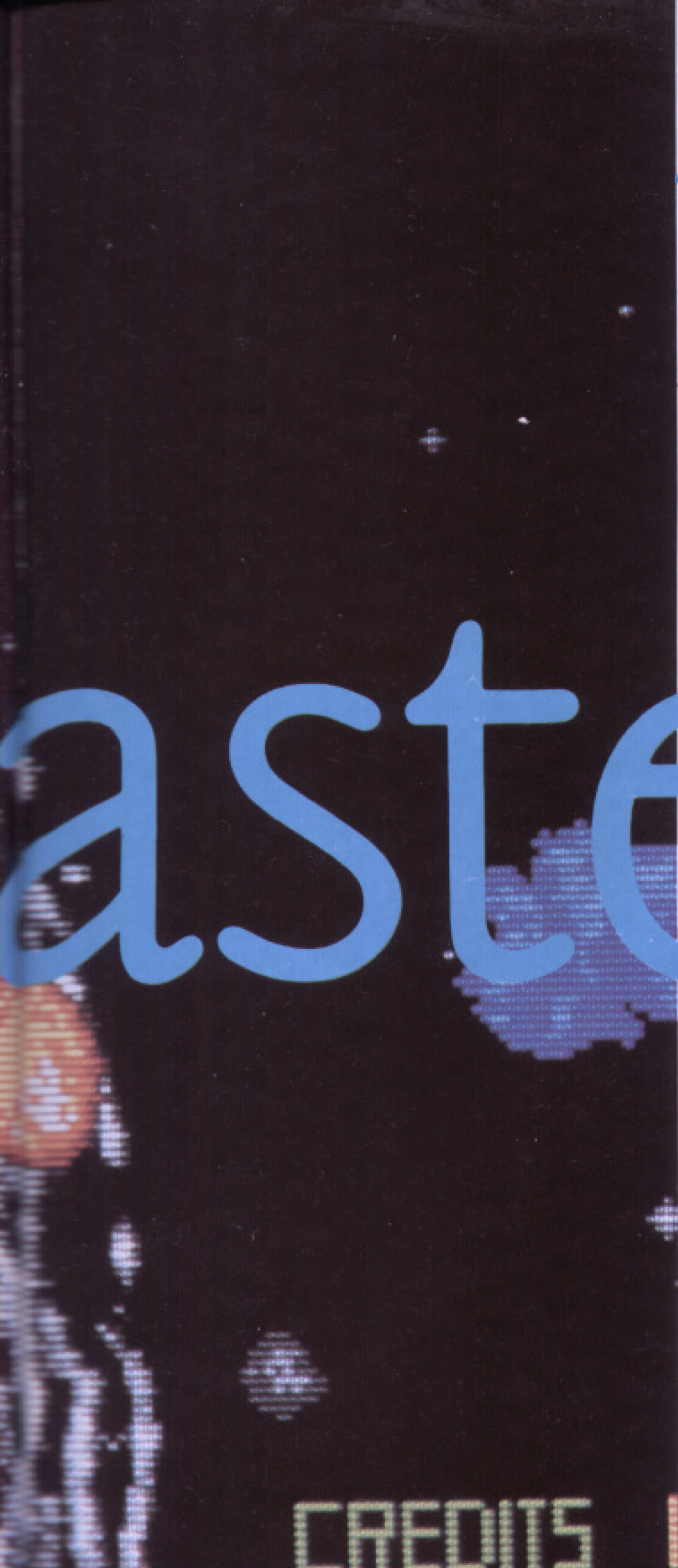




You can play simultaneously with a friend, covering each other's backsides or stealing the very energy from under each other's noses. If it's your best friend though, you could always join together, with one player shooting four bullets with the Speeder and the second rotating and thrusting with the Warrior.









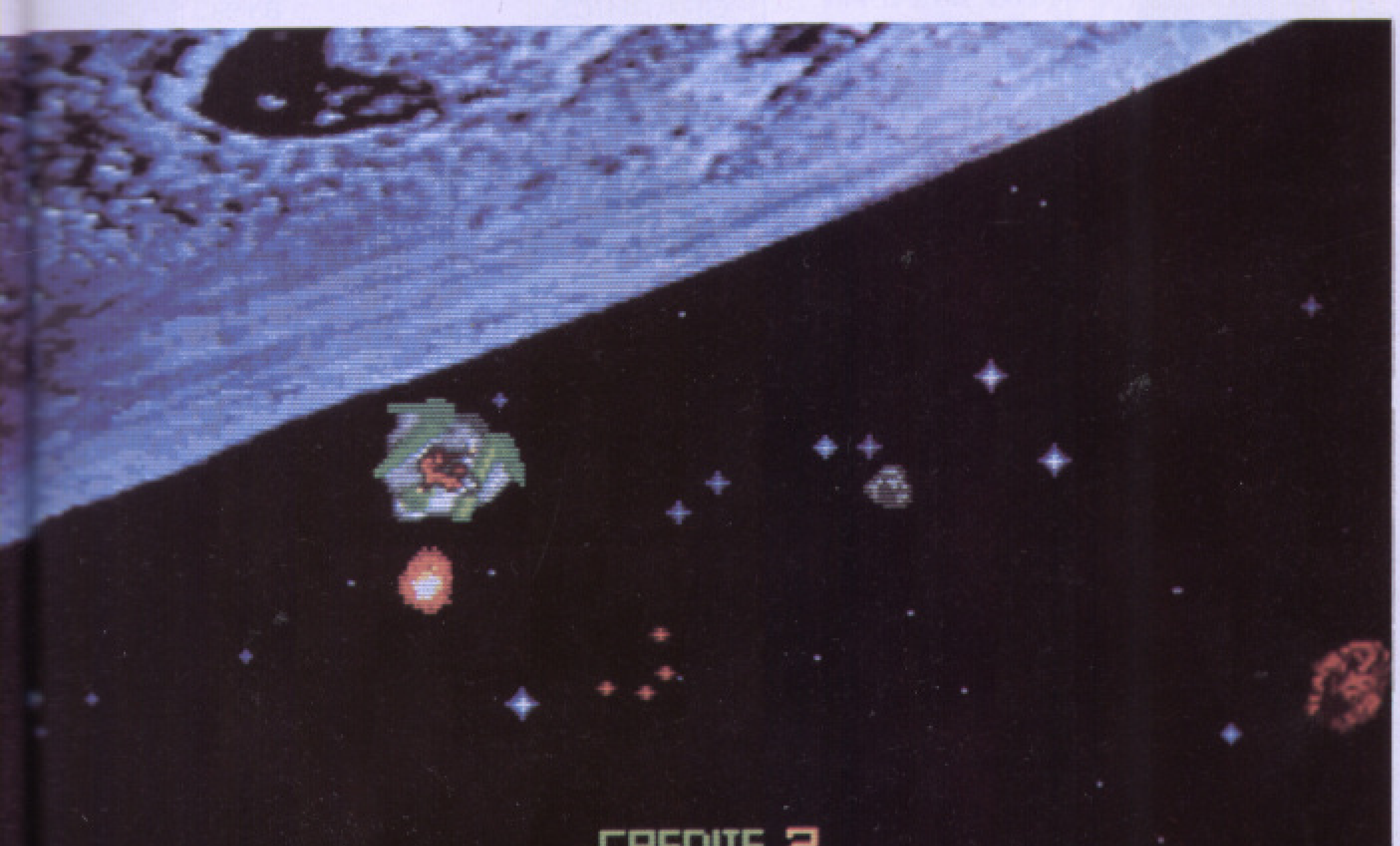
Atari rifled its own archives to score another arcade smash. Gary Penn gets his rocks off.

asteroids

Atari's **Asteroids** is undoubtedly one of the all-time classic coin-ops. Its simplistic but addictive shoot 'em up formula has been imitated over the years, but arguably never improved.

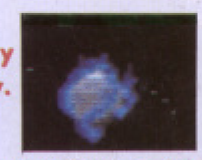
Undeterred however, Atari saw fit to release a sequel in 1987. This kept the basic concept, but the result was a far cry from the vector graphic predecessor. Both graphics and sound were glorified, with detailed planet backdrops introduced in the process. In addition, the hyperspace function was discarded and new features and adversaries added.

Mirrorsoft acquired the licence as one of its first titles for its Image Works label, but it's taken until now for Teque software to complete its development.

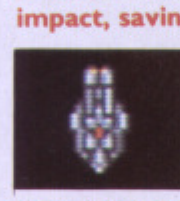


EQUIPMENT

Destroying enemy craft causes them to leave behind special equipment, the effects of which last for a limited period. The first time you collect an add-on, a description of its capabilities is given – a form of tutorial similar to that seen in *Gauntlet*.



Shields take the brunt of any impact, saving precious energy.



Pick up the Blasters for double the firepower.



Extra Shot Power increases the penetration of your laser bolts.



Anyone who has seen *The Last Starfighter* will recognise the devastating effect of the Ripstar. Your ship spins around at high speed, firing furiously – just like the Death Blossom weapon.



Extra Fuel Capacity allows your ship to carry more energy, which means it runs out slower.



The Booster increases your craft's thrust power.



Pull the Power Crystals like birds in the bar with the Crystal Magnet.



The Cloak makes your ship invisible to the enemy.



▲ The not-so-jolly green giant, Mukor, appears when you've cleared every sector in a Galaxy. Avoiding the enemy ships thrown at you, you attempt to blast away his tentacles, forcing him to depart and leave behind special weapons.

THREE-IN-ONE

The basic ship has three different configurations, transforming between them to the sound of a beefy clank.



The Speeder is the only choice for speed freaks. It's nippy and versatile, with reasonable firepower, but the weak shell is a drawback.



The Fighter is the headcases' delight, with planet-shattering firepower and adequate speed and armour.



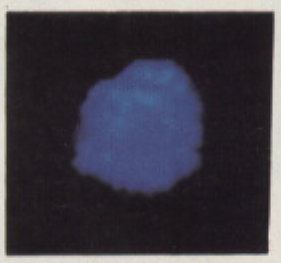
Those who hanker for all-round protection should choose the Warrior. However, what you gain on the swings you lose on the roundabouts as both the speed and firepower leave a lot to be desired.

ASTEROIDS

Remember the original asteroids? Large line-drawn polygons split into smaller and smaller pieces before eventually evaporating. This time around, the filled and realistic rocks only divide once before smashing to pieces.

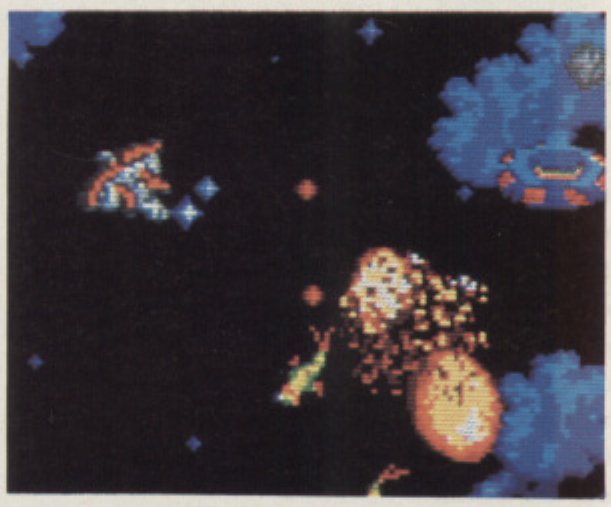


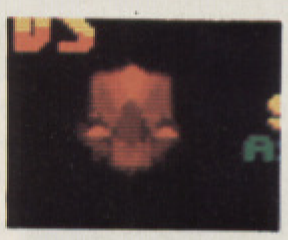
Red asteroids behave normally, but release Power Crystals when eradicated.



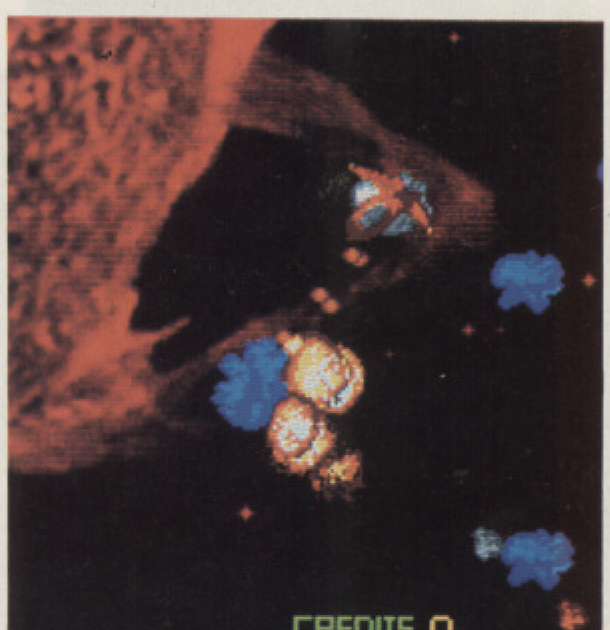
The oddly-named Popcorn asteroids grow with each hit before eventually stopping.

Shooting the Alien-esque Egg Asteroids releases energy-sucking leeches which immediately home in on your ship.





It take several hits to destroy the Seeker Asteroids, but only one shot to cause them to fly towards you at high speed.



A Once again Teque Software has succeeded in producing a competent reproduction of a cult coin-op, capturing all the playabilty and addictive qualities of the arcade parent. There are a few elements missing – at worse the deep, bassy rumbling sound of the rocks – but the 16-colour backdrops are impressive, and most importantly the feel of the coin-op is intact. However, there is one flaw – but this applies to the original, not the conversion. Blasteroids isn't the improvement over the original that was possibly intended. The fact that Atari saw fit to provide the player with an objective means that Asteroids now has a definite end. The original worked because you knew it would never end, so you could continually come back for more in an attempt to increase your score. The process of producing contemporary versions of age-old concepts like Asteroids always seems to follow a predictable pattern, ie: take the original theme, tart up the graphics, beef up the sound and add a few new features. But somewhere along the line the most important aspect is lost – the thrill and feel of the original. How many Asteroids fans played Blasteroids, were initially impressed but after a few games realised that it wasn't anywhere near as atmospheric and nail-biting? It's fortunate that the gameplay is strong enough to make it work. But only just.

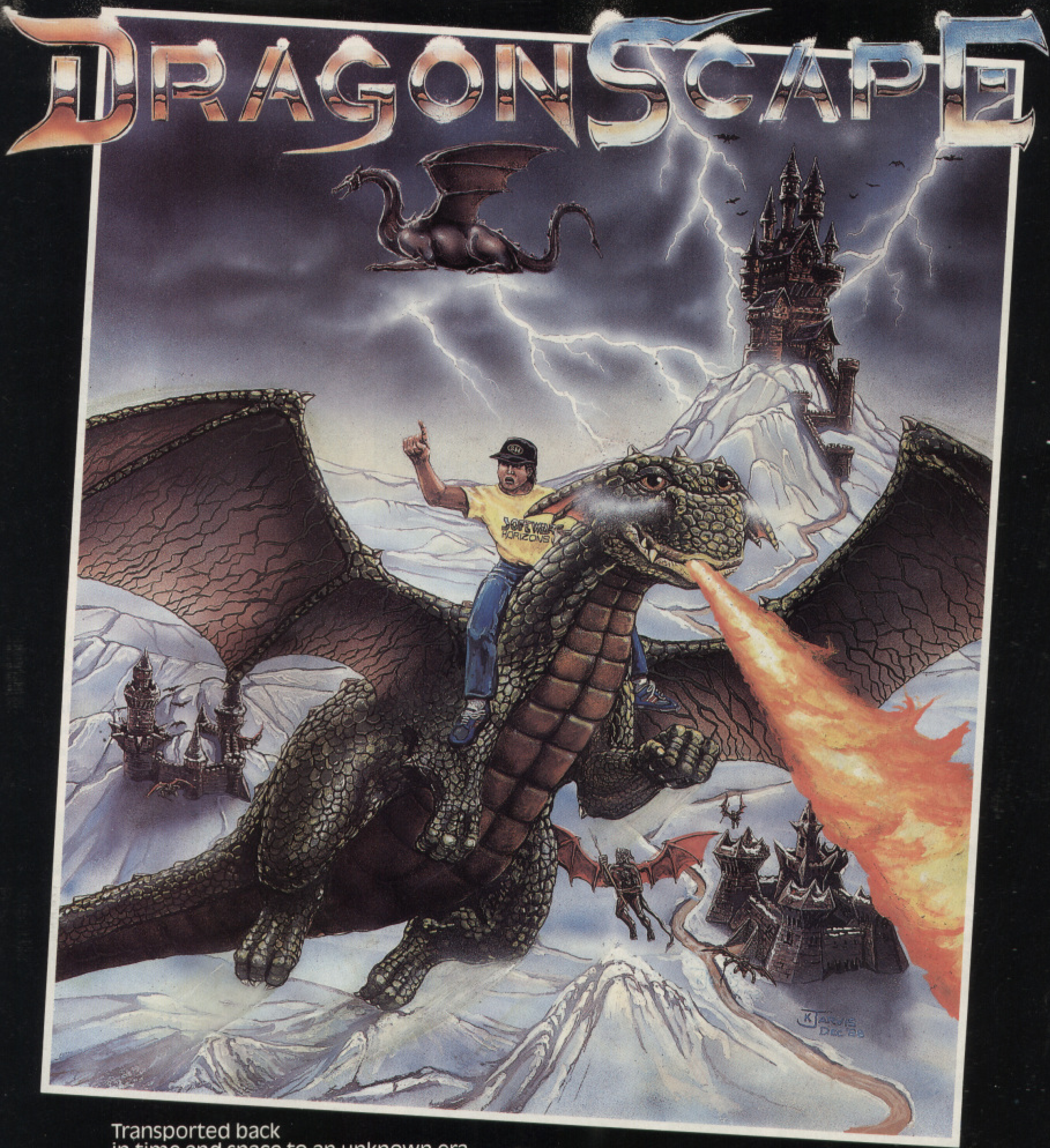
PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	81%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	80%
VALUE	69%

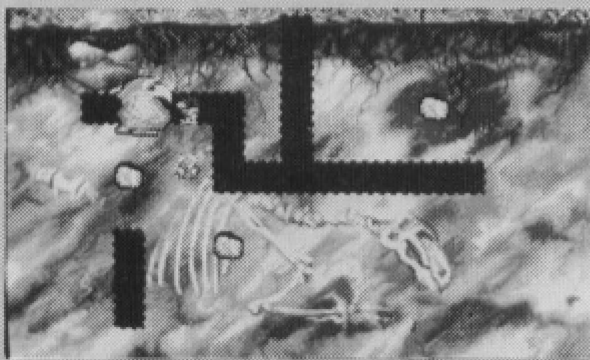
OVERALL 81%

ST The fact that the backdrops are only four colours doesn't make Blasteroids any less playable. In fact, the option to play in either 50 or 60 MHz mode makes up for the hardly apparent lack of colour.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	81%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	80%
VALUE	69%

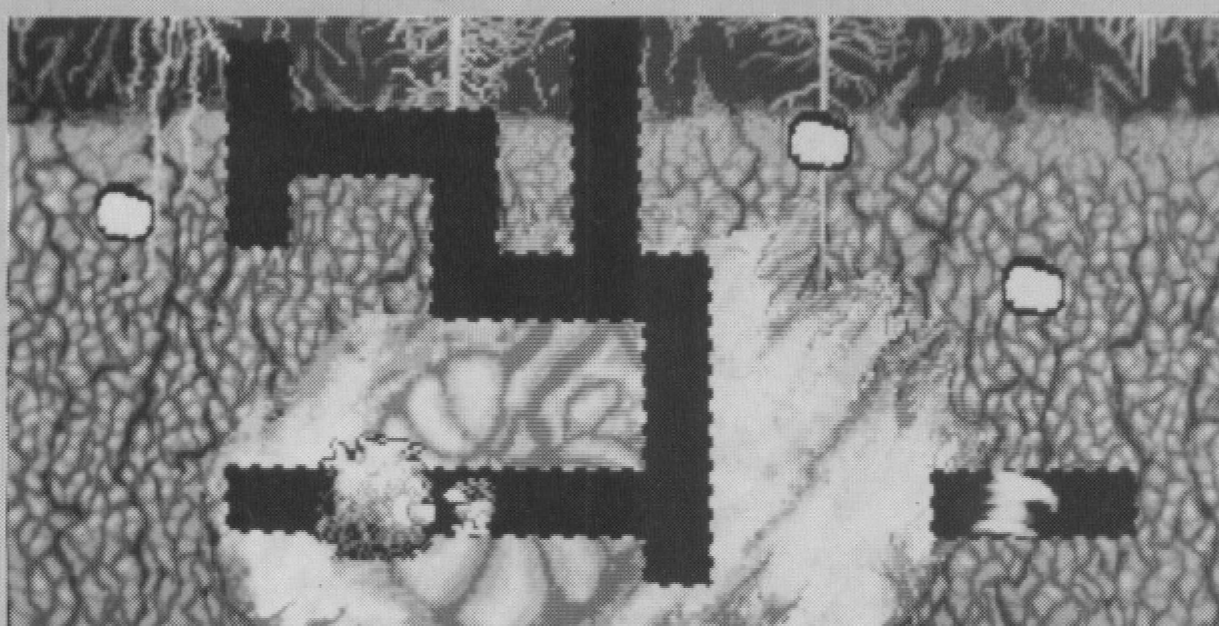
OVERALL 81%


DRAGONSCAPE



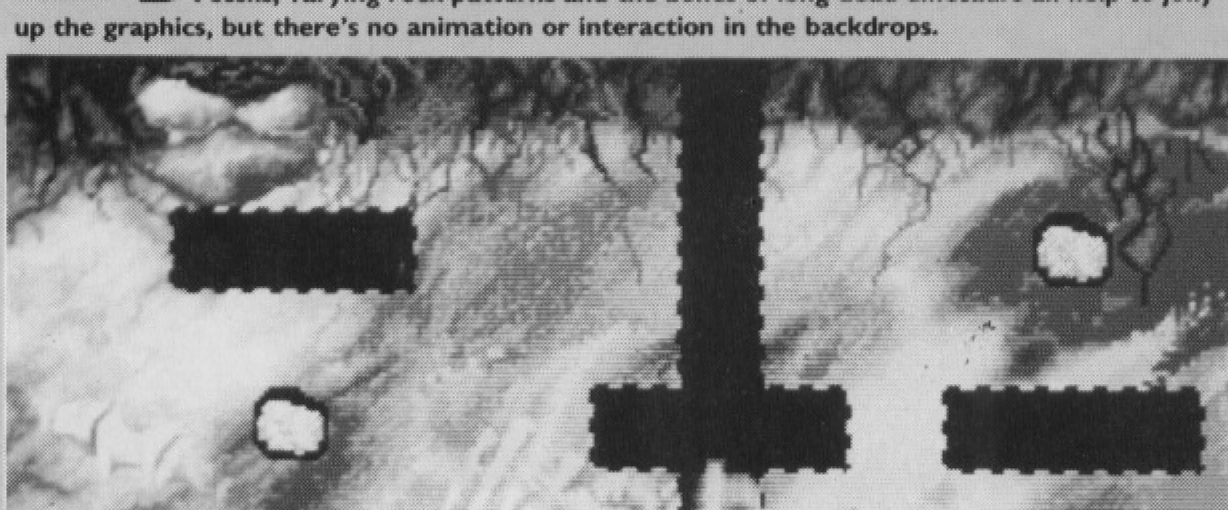
Dugg

Gary Whitta trades his bat and ball for a shovel and foot pump in the second instalment of Linel's ongoing saga of Herbie Stone.

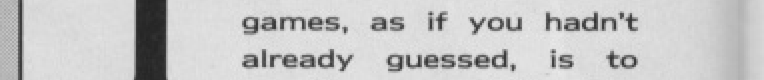


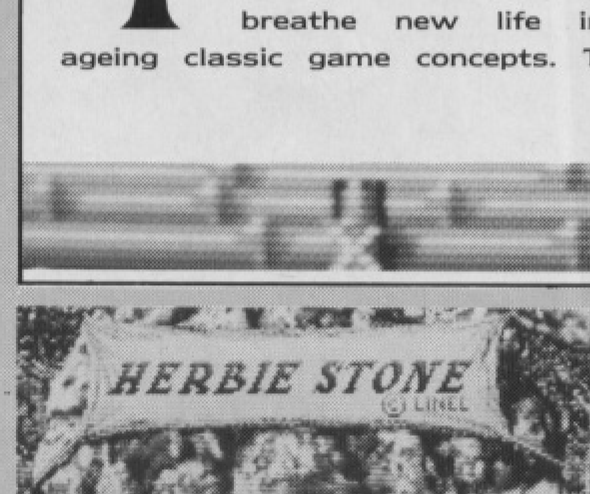
▲ **Hang around too long and the monsters mutate into shimmering entities that float through the earth and home in on Herbie. A speedy Herbie can catch and pump them as they transform back to their normal shape.**

▼ **Dugger's aesthetic advantage over its parent is the suitably prehistoric backdrops. Fossils, varying rock patterns and the bones of long-dead dinosaurs all help to jolly up the graphics, but there's no animation or interaction in the backdrops.**

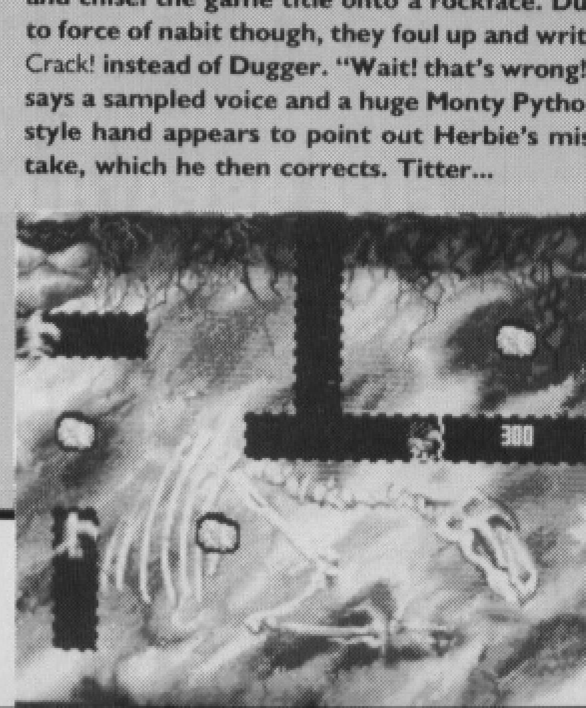


The idea behind Linel's series of Herbie Stone games, as if you hadn't already guessed, is to breathe new life into ageing classic game concepts. The

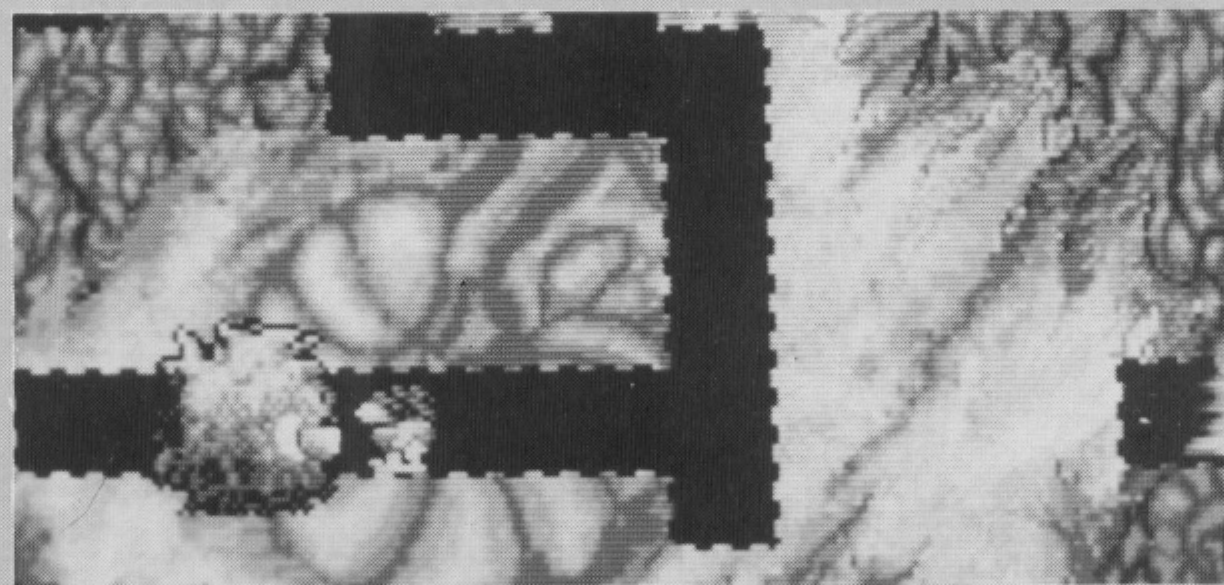




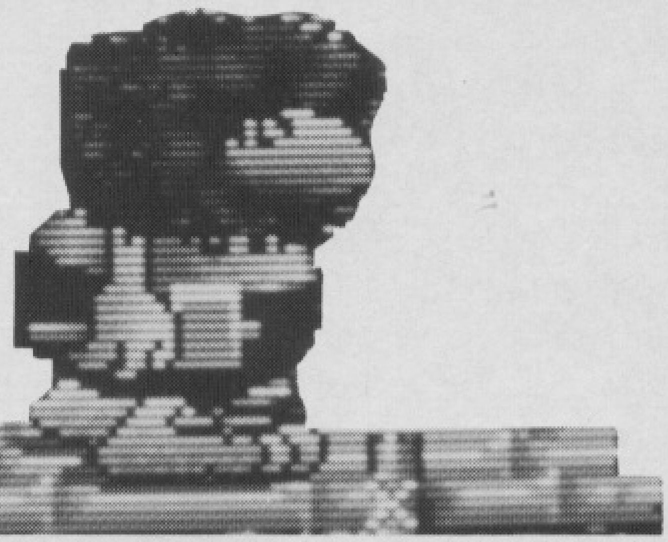
▼ **Following in the tradition of** Crack!, **a cute attract sequence begins the game. Herbie and his pals dash on screen and chisel the game title onto a rockface. Due to force of nabit though, they foul up and write** Crack! **instead of Dugger. "Wait! that's wrong!" says a sampled voice and a huge Monty Python style hand appears to point out Herbie's mistake, which he then corrects. Titter...**



er

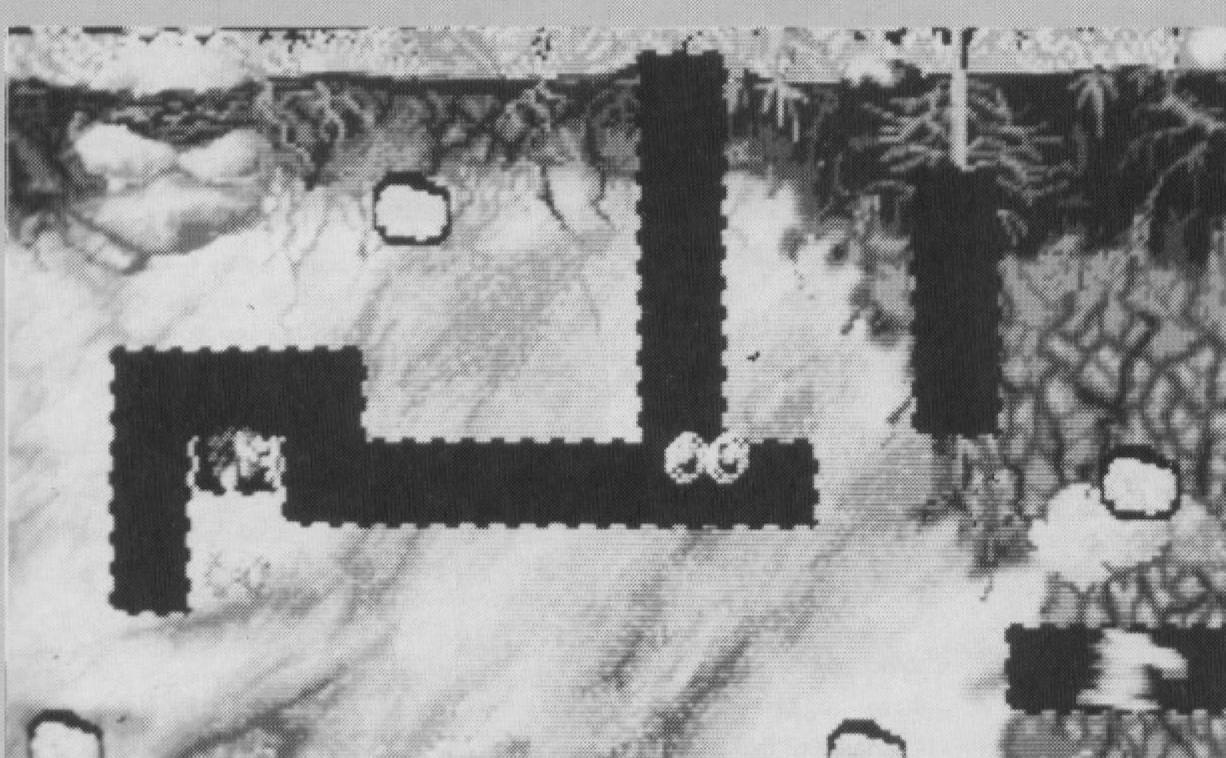


Rather than spending his time pumping up the volume, Herbie can earn bonus points by tunneling under special rocks. If this action is timed correctly, the ground under the rock gives way and it falls onto the head of an unsuspecting nasty.



first, **Crack!** was a fair attempt at **Breakout** that didn't make much of an impact due to **Arkanoid** taking all the limelight. This time, the game that's examined and updated with a prehistoric flavour is Atari's **Dig Dug**.

Herbie's task is to rid each underground screen of the enemy patrollers. When he comes across a monster, he produces a foot pump, which inflates it through several sizes until it eventually explodes (in the best possible taste of course).



A

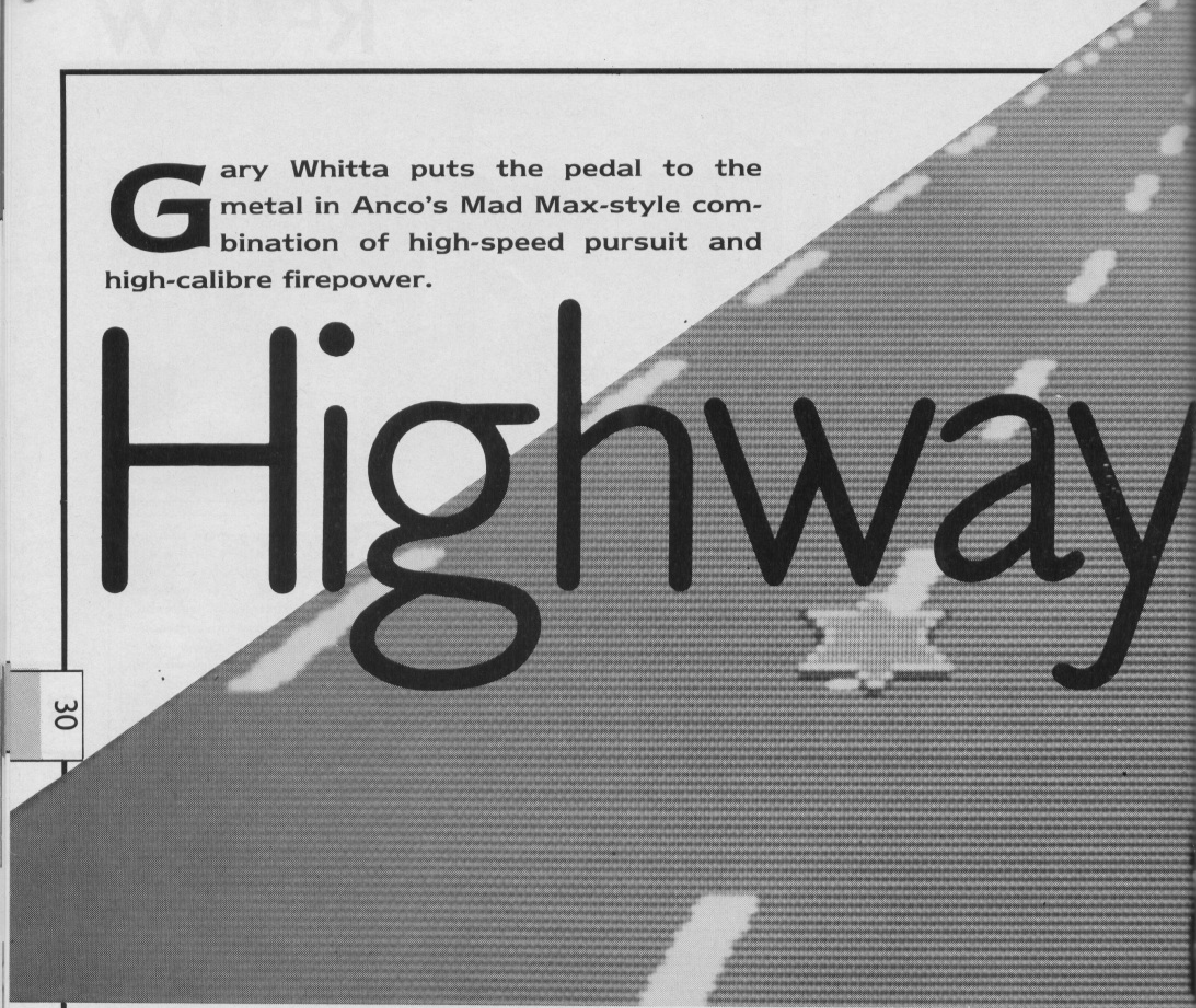
Although there is a lot of potential for a game in the Dig Dug or Mr Do vein, Dugger fails to realise it, as there haven't been enough enhancements made to the gameplay. There are no extra weapons to collect, no bonus levels and very little variation from screen to screen. Instead, the programmers have opted to just touch up the background graphics, add a smart byte-waiting opening sequence... and leave it at that. The sprites are none too impressive (those in the original Atari console game were larger and better defined!) which can only be put down to laziness. The final nail in the coffin is the repetitive gameplay which seems to consist of killing two or three nasties before progressing to the next, all-too similar screen – a problem which never afflicted the original. Herbie has failed to impress this time, but hopefully he'll be third time lucky with perhaps a stone-age Stargate or prehistoric Pac-Man (then again, perhaps not).

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	43%
SOUND	40%
PLAYABILITY	55%
VALUE	39%

OVERALL 46%

ST

There's very little to separate this version from its Amiga counterpart, so therefore each of the above ratings applies equally here. The price and release date are also indentical.

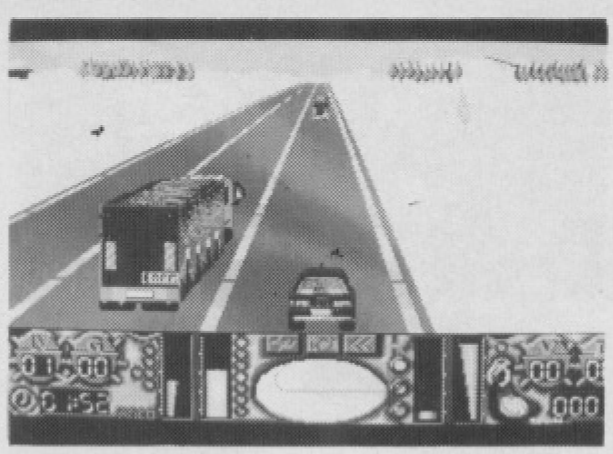


Gary Whitta puts the pedal to the metal in Anco's Mad Max-style combination of high-speed pursuit and high-calibre firepower.

Highway

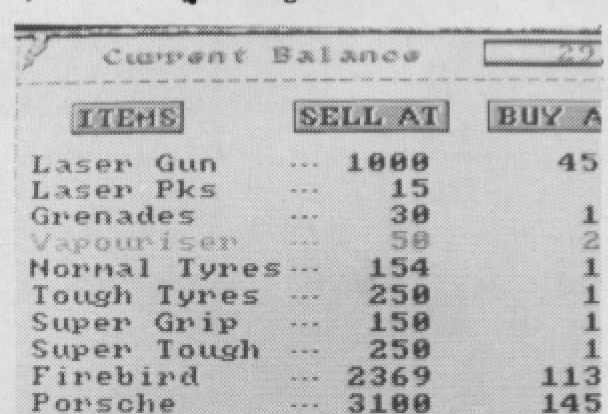
Highway Hawks isn't about leisurely law-abiding right-side-of-the-road driving. Maiming, killing, burning and shooting is more the name of the game here.

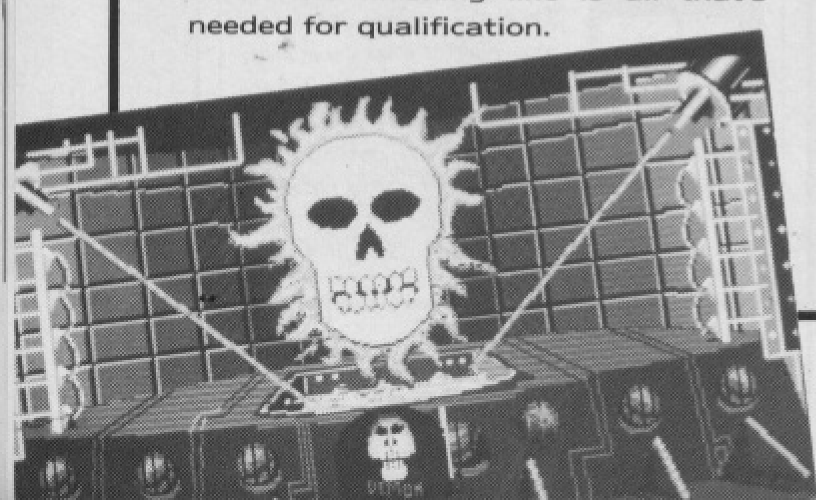
Strictly speaking this isn't a race game, as it doesn't matter where you finish in relation to the other cars and there's no time limit. Instead, just managing to survive long enough to reach the finishing line is all that's needed for qualification.



▲ **Your battered Ford Escort-lookalike is capable of firing concentrated bolts of plasma energy (so concentrated in fact that the bullets are just two pixels large). But there's no explosion when an enemy car is shot, no great shards of twisted flaming metal. Instead the opposition just disappears without trace.**

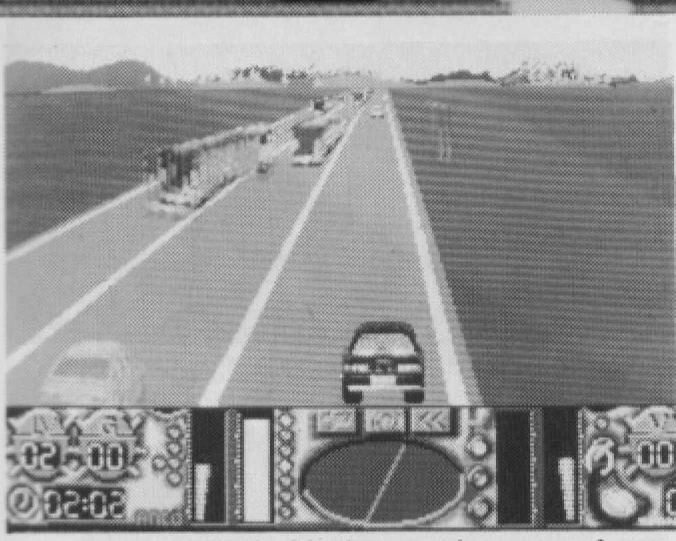
▼ **Points acquired by frying innocent motorists are traded in between races for such awesome customisations as vaporisers, a laser cannon and the imaginatively named 'Super Tough'.**





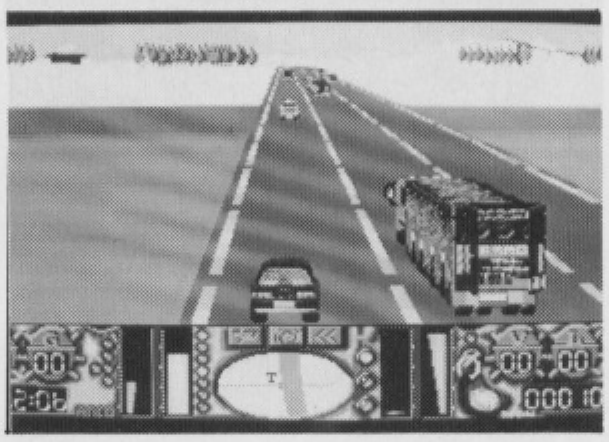


Hawks



Fuel is the most important factor, so it's necessary to make constant bee-lines for the fuel stars that are dropped from the multitude of tankers. There's a free set of crystal wine glasses for every six gallons collected (at participating stations only).

Squeeze off a couple of rounds at a juggernaut and you could find yourself in for a surprise. The rear doors may swing open to release useful (or not so useful) items. At best you get a crate of ammunition, at worst you find yourself spinning out of control on a puddle of oil (honest guv, it fell off the back of a lorry!).



A Highway Hawks is arguably the most enjoyable attempt at a Road Blasters game to date, but to be fair that's only because previous efforts weren't much to shout about. It's certainly one of the speediest race games around, and for once you don't get the impression of the car staying still while the road scrolls under it. However it seems that to achieve this effect, the quality of the sprites and backdrops had to suffer. Weaving between traffic and blowing away cars is fun (even without any explosions), but it's let down by the small sprites and bland backdrops. At the very least Highway Hawks shows that speedy graphics manipulation in a race game is possible, and had the aesthetics matched their speed this could well have been the best game of its type so far.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	57%
SOUND	31%
PLAYABILITY	70%
VALUE	62%

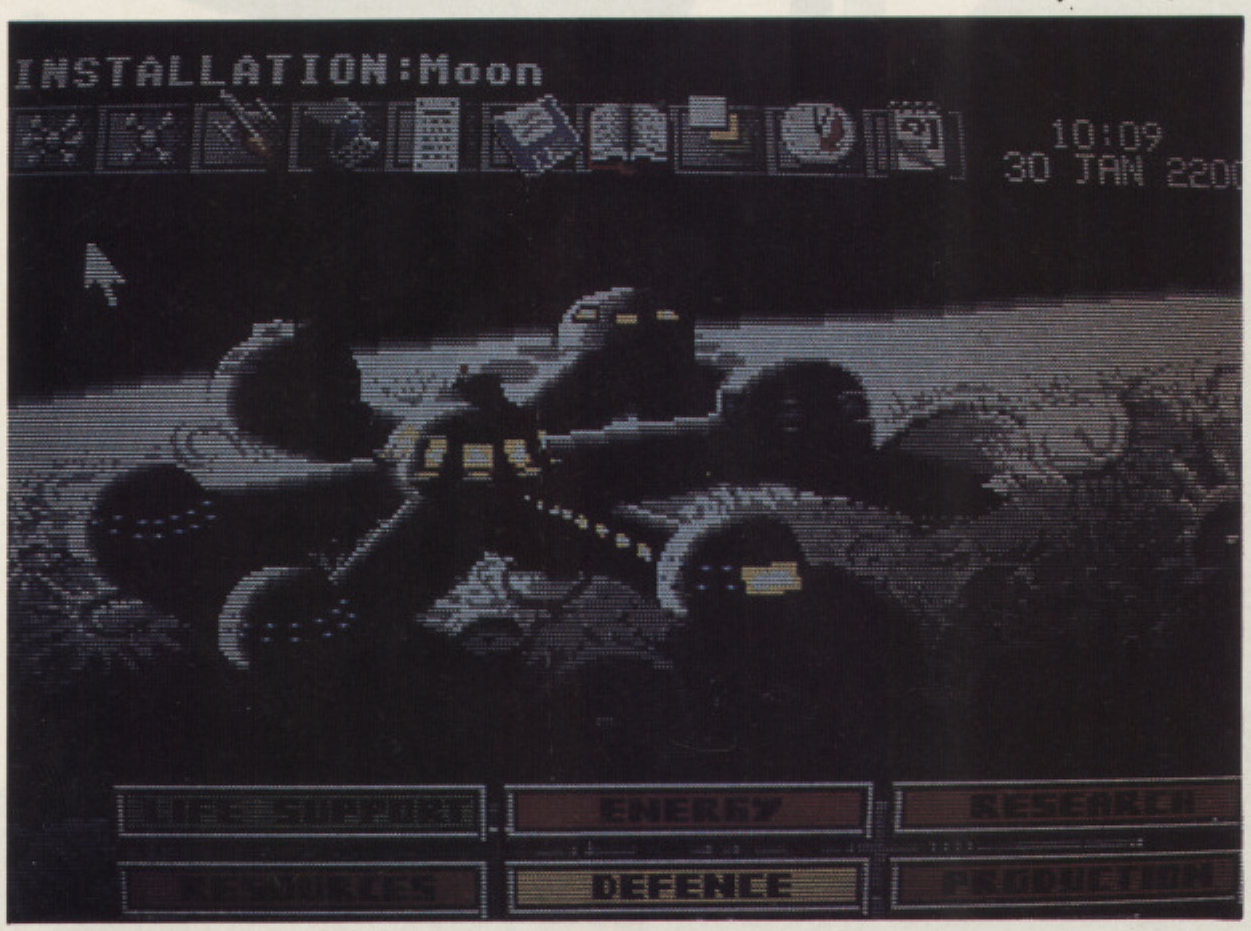
OVERALL 65%

ST To appear only slightly behind the Amiga, this version will hit the shelves at the same price. The graphics and sound should only be slightly weaker, but more importantly the gameplay is expected to survive the transition intact. Watch out for an update next month.

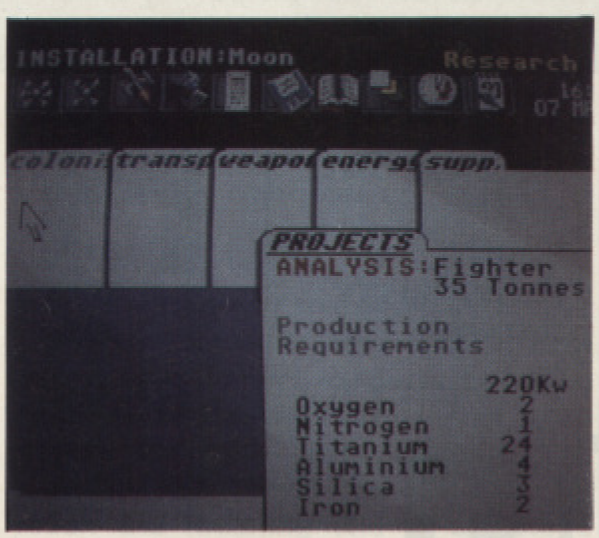


Mil

The future according to Activision sees the Earth dying and fate resting in the hands of a tiny group of space colonists. Gary Whitta lends a hand . . .



As the commander of the moonbase survivors, your aim is to find a way to make Earth fit for human habitation before the Martians seize the planet for themselves. Divided into six sections (shown here as the 'arms' of the moonbase), the facilities available are Research, Production, Resources, Life Supprt, Defence and Energy. Each of these departments can be visited at any time, with their status displayed underneath the moonbase as either Green (running smoothly), Yellow (occupied or engaged) or Red (under threat).



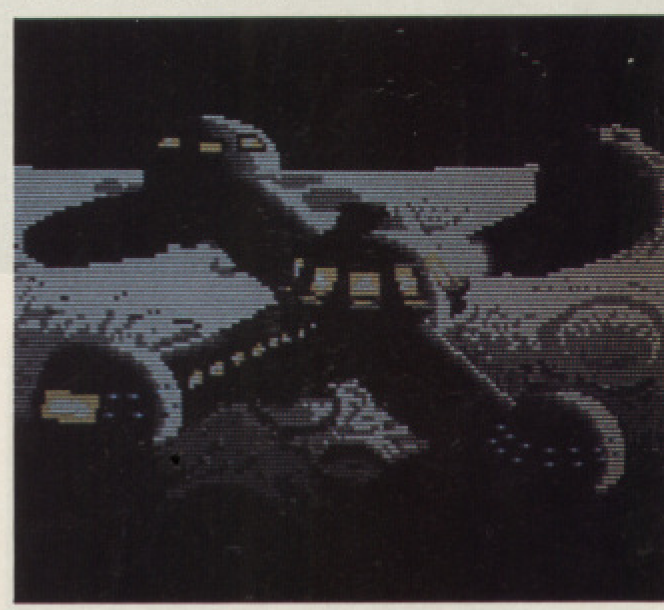
The Research Centre is one of the most vital departments – as very little is known about any of the spaceships, equipment and transport available at the outset. Selected items are automatically investigated by your science team, with the complexity of the item dictating the amount of time taken.

Equipment can't be built without the necessary materials, so this is where the Resources facility comes into play. Raw materials are extracted from a fully-automated mine and then taken to the production centre. A great deal of power is used to run this mine, so it's a good idea to shut it down from time to time.



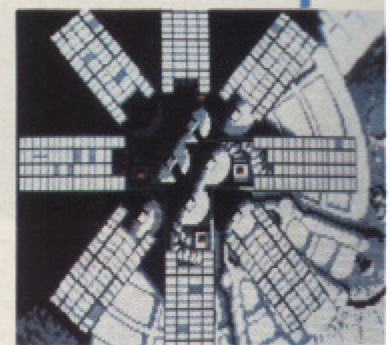
The year is 2200. A collision with a huge asteroid has wiped out the Earth's entire population and the planet has been rendered an uninhabitable volcanic rock. The only survivors of the disaster were a small colony of scientists based at an experimental research centre on the moon. As if this group didn't have enough trouble, a race of Martian mutants has seen the disaster as an opportunity to conquer Earth and has declared war on the hundred-odd humans holed up on the moon.

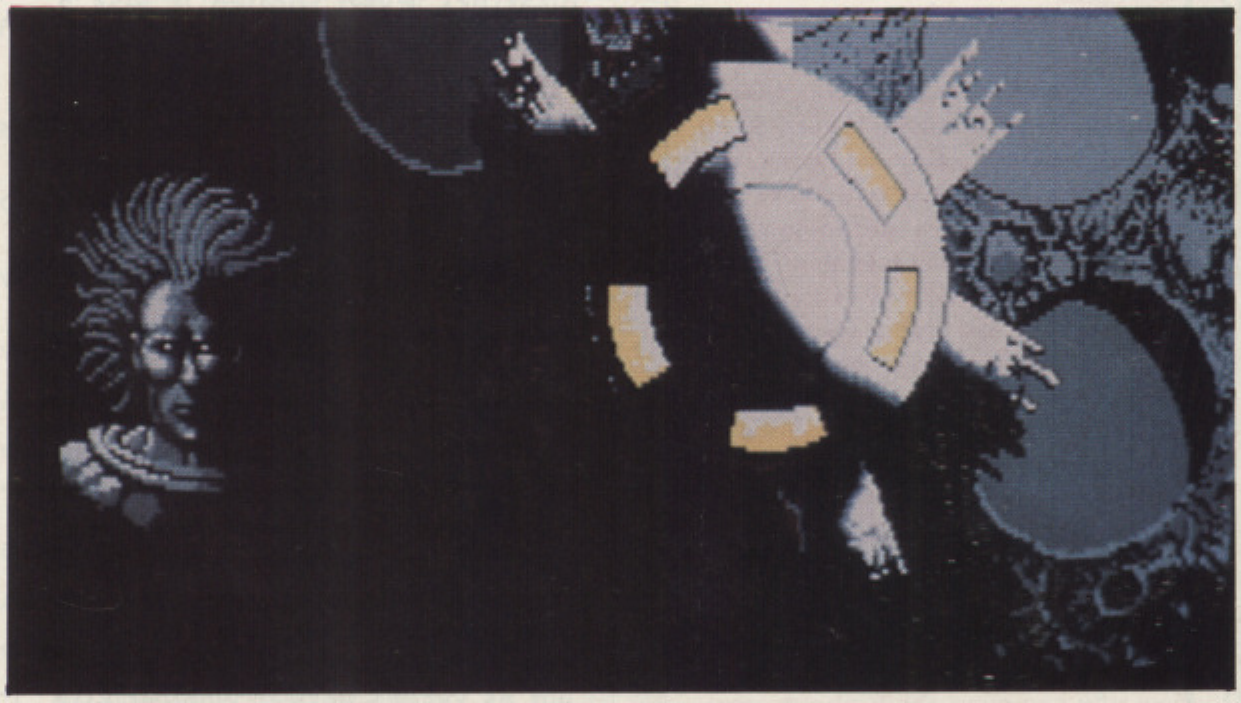
The moonbase commander has discovered that, even with the limited supplies and resources available, it may be possible to reconstruct the Earth's atmosphere so that it can once again sustain human life. That is, of course, if the colony can hold off the scheming Martians long enough to work out how . . .



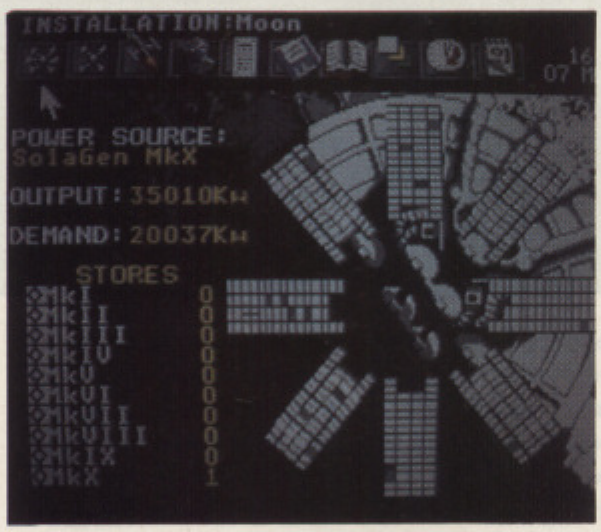
Certain vital raw materials aren't available on the moon, so it soon becomes necessary to visit other planets in the galactic system. Following a report from a reconnaissance pod, a 'pilgrim' group of colonists is dispatched to the destination planet together with a S.I.O.S. (a scaled-down version of your own moonbase). The new colony cannot produce equipment for itself (only the moon has a production department), so ships must be sent back and forth between the colonies.

lennium 2·2





Colonists stationed on alien worlds are liable to mutate genetically into a new species, depending on the atmosphere, temperature and other variables. Strange as it may seem, this is actually an advantage as mutants have the added advantage of being able to live outside the base on the planet surface, and can grow without the need to update the life support system. Clever, eh?



Power for both the moonbase and its pilgrim stations is collected from the sun by 'Solagen' solar panels. The player starts with a single standard (Mk I) Solagen, but this can be upgraded as more materials and information become available.

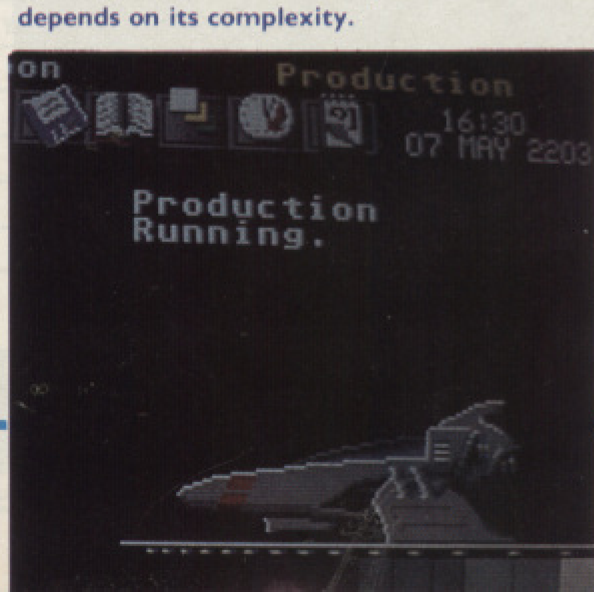
When an item is selected to be built, the factory computer checks to see if it has been researched and if the necessary materials and energy are available. If everything checks out, production takes place automatically. As in the Research section, the time taken to produce the item depends on its complexity.

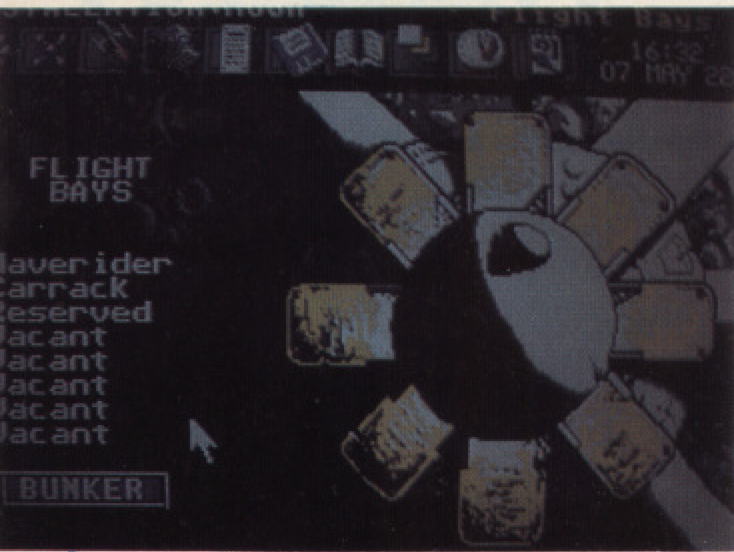


The flight bay situated in the centre of each S.I.O.S. base can handle up to eight ships, regardless of their size or type. The most common ships are the Waverider and Carrack, used to transport minerals and equipment between the colonies, while the reconnaissance pod is a disposable device used to gather data on neighbouring planets. Each ship has a different size cargo bay (so some are better suited to courier missions than others), and requires a different sized crew.

Millenium 2.2 is played in real-time, with two compression options provided to speed up the action (these are necessary, as it's been estimated that the game would take more than 23 years to complete without them!). This realism extends to the galactic map, which not only accurately charts the positions of all known planets in the solar system as they would be in the year 2200, but also moves them in exactly the same orbit speed and trajectory as their real-life counterparts!







Millennium 2.2 **was designed and developed by Ian Bird (the man behind Activision's former strategy game** High Frontier**) under the title of 2200AD. That name, however, had to be changed as it was considered to be too close to the title of the sci-fi comic 2000AD. The next name chosen was The Phoenix Factor (after Operation Phoenix, the moon colonists' plan for Earth to 'rise from the ashes' of the asteroid disaster). Even though it was a clever title, the powers that be didn't like it, and so the team at Software Studios, Activision's in-house software development team, were asked to title the game. They came up with the dubious title of F.O.M.M. (short for F**k Off Martian Mutants) and the graphic artist even went as far too design a commercial-quality F.O.M.M. title screen! That title was scrapped for the obvious reason that no reputable shop would stock a game with a controversial name like that, and so at last** Millennium 2.2 **was chosen – effectively reverting to the original title.**

ST Carrier Command was previously the most involved and enjoyable 16-bit strategy game, and Millennium 2.2 is easily in the same league. The design is sheer genius, and the way in which all the separate elements link together is nothing short of amazing. Learning to play takes only a couple of hours, but devising strategies that will allow you to expand your empire and maintain it could take months. Bold decision making is the order of the day: should you scrap your last spaceship so that you can retrieve the much needed materials for an extra Solagen? Can you afford to spare 30 of your colonists to go on a courier mission? Should you shut down your resources mine, cutting off your vital supply of minerals so you can use the power to maintain the production line? Make the wrong decision and you start a chain reaction that will cause your empire to collapse. And all that before you can even think about recolonising Earth! Even if it is a little slow paced to start off with, the game's structure means that there's nearly always something to do (or worry about) and the arcade sequence provides a refreshing break from the strategy. There are even a couple of sub-plots to vary the gameplay – including a killer space-virus that crops up late in the game. The whole thing is very involved, partly due to the atmospheric sound effects, and as such it's easy to 'lose yourself' in the game. The graphic design is clear and uncluttered, and along with the icon/mouse control and the variety of options, helps to make the game one of the most user-friendly to date. If you're not a strategy game fan already, this is the one to convert you. Millenium 2.2 is a brilliant piece of game design and programming that can proudly take its place alongside the likes of Elite and Carrier Command.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	March
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	87%
VALUE	84%

OVERALL 85%

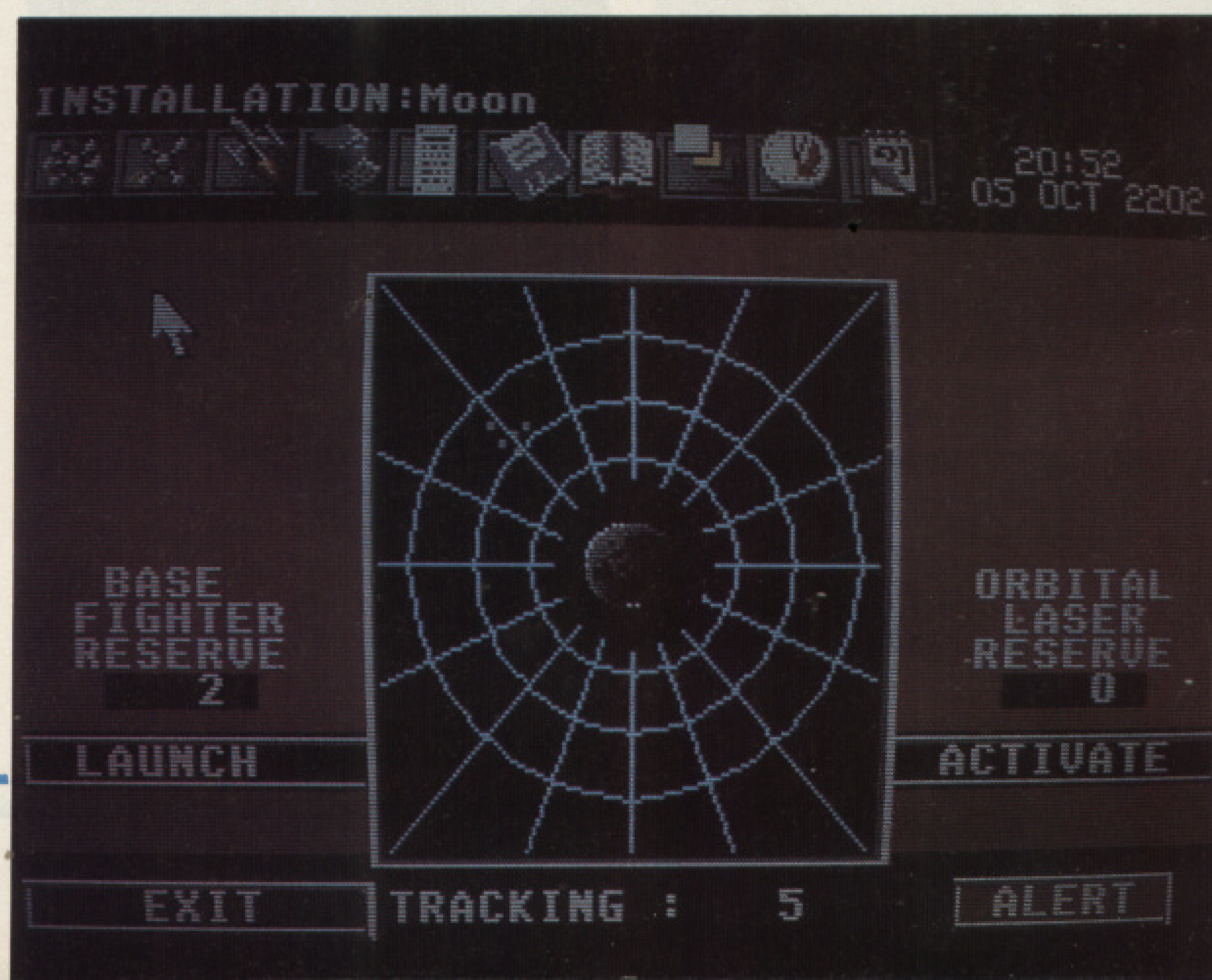
A This version will almost certainly be identical to its ST counterpart, with minor enhancements in the music and sound effects. It should appear in March at the same price.

PC Also available in late March at the higher price of £24.99, the PC version was the first to be developed (the game was originally text only and the graphics were only added recently). There will definitely be a CGA version, but as yet it's unclear whether EGA will also be supported.

A base's life support system consists of a living quarter, supplied by oxygen and food. A basic S.I.O.S. can only sustain around 100 people, but extensions to the system ('nodules') allow the population to expand (necessary for replacing those killed in alien attacks and for crewing spaceships).



The warmongering Martians do their best to hinder your progress. A bulletin board alerts the colony to an attack and switches to the defence screen, where a tactical map displays the invasion fleet approachng your base. There are two types of defence with which to fend off the Martians; Orbital Lasers are computer-controlled satellites that hover in space taking potshots at whatever comes their way, while Fighters are controled manually. Launching one begins an Elite-style filled-vector graphics shoot 'em up between you and one of the Martian ships. Fighters and lasers don't come free though, and if the Martians arrive before you've built up your forces all you can do is sit back and watch them tear your colony to shreds.



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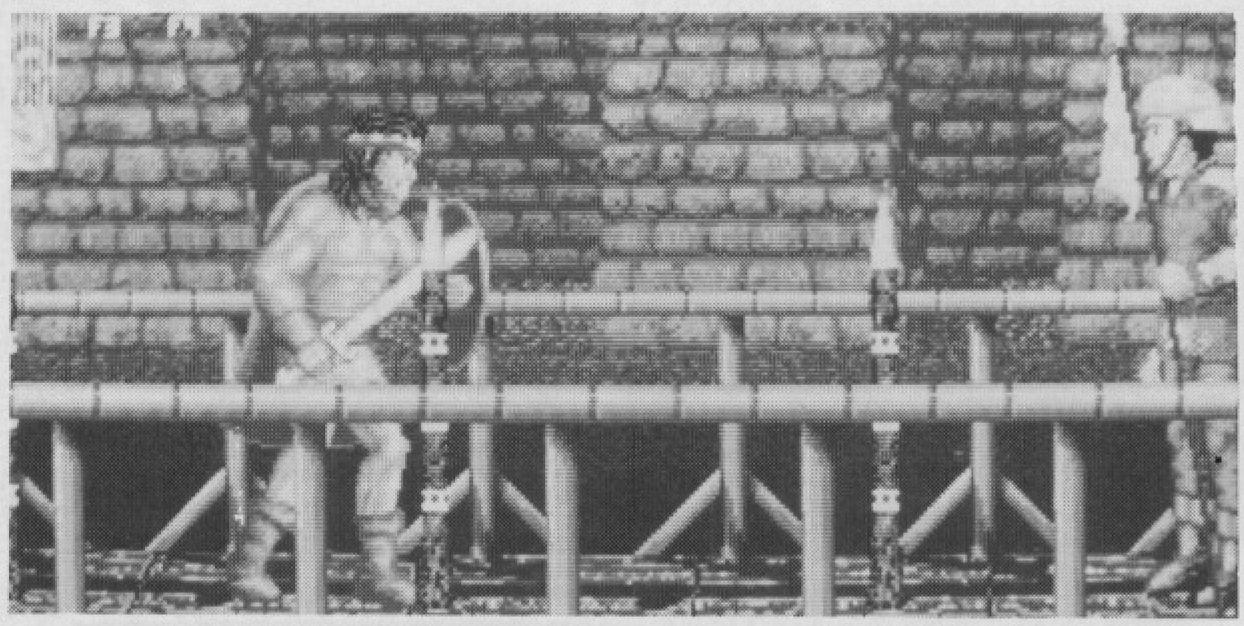
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SworddO

Gary Whitta flexes his pectorals and unsheaths his weapon in Discovery's combination of spirits, spectres and sword-slaying action.





▲ **The bridge section is one of the toughest to complete, with deadly spikes springing up from the floor putting Brodan's ganderparts in extreme danger (ouch!).**

Sword of Sodan's extravagant plot tells of Lordan, the king of a magical world of myths and legends who is slain by an evil wizard. The dead king's son and daughter find the sword of the great warrior Sodan and set out to avenge their father.

Lordan's son is Brodan, a hunky beefcake with rippling flesh and long flowing locks, while his twin sister Shardan is... very much the same actually. Either offspring is controlled in similar fashion to Palace's **Barbarian II**. What follows is another strut and slash session along a scrolling background, with massive characters facing off against detailed backgrounds.



◀ **One of the first battles takes place in the cobbled streets of the local market town. Not only are there hordes of armoured footsoldiers to slay, but a nimble leaping manoeuvre is called for as barrels also roll down the street. At the end of the level a sword-brandishing giant awaits decapitation in one of the game's most bloodthirsty graphic sequences.**



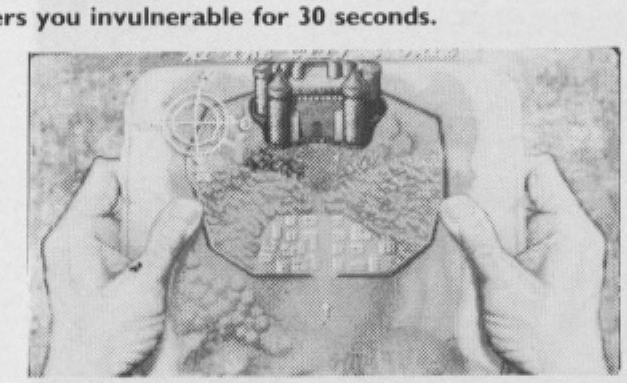
Of Sodan



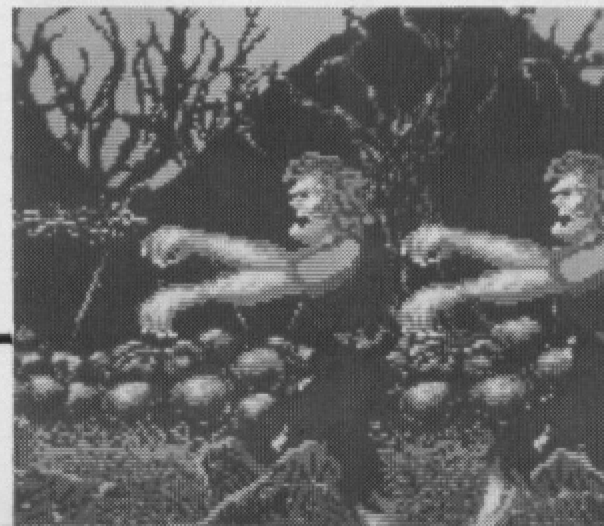


Special items and power-ups can be collected along the way. Apart from the obligatory extra lives, there's a Magic Zapper (smart bomb), a spell to increase the sword's cutting power and a shield which renders you invulnerable for 30 seconds.





The road to Zora's domain is spread across 11 levels, and is shown here on Brodan's map, which appears at the beginning of each level to indicate the area he is about to enter.



A Discovery has a reputation for excellent graphics – a tradition which has happily continued in this case. The sprites, all of which are at least half the screen in height, are extremely well defined and animated, and coupled with the marvellous parallax scrolling backdrops serve to give the game an almost coin-op quality. Wolves cry and thunder claps in the graveyard while the flying bat-creatures shriek hideously when killed, adding sonic atmosphere to the package. It's a shame then that the gameplay doesn't live up to the standards set by the aesthetics. It's possible to hack a path through half of the game first time around, simply by hammering away on the fire button whenever an enemy came near. The traps and airborne adversaries on later levels help to vary the gameplay, but ultimately there's some doubt as to its staying power.

PRICE	£29.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	83%
PLAYABILITY	60%
VALUE	37%

OVERALL 62%

ST Discovery Software has an ST version in the pipeline (breaking its three-game Amiga-only tradition), scheduled to appear in early spring at £24.99. Programming is still in the early stages however, so it's uncertain as to how many disks the game will occupy.

PC Work on this version has only just begun, but it should appear at the same time and price as the ST. It's likely to be EGA only, so those with lowly CGA machines may have to miss out.





Always quick off the mark, Microprose's latest flight program simulates an aircraft which has only just come out from under wraps. PC User's Declan McColgan takes to the air for an early test flight.

F-1 Stealth



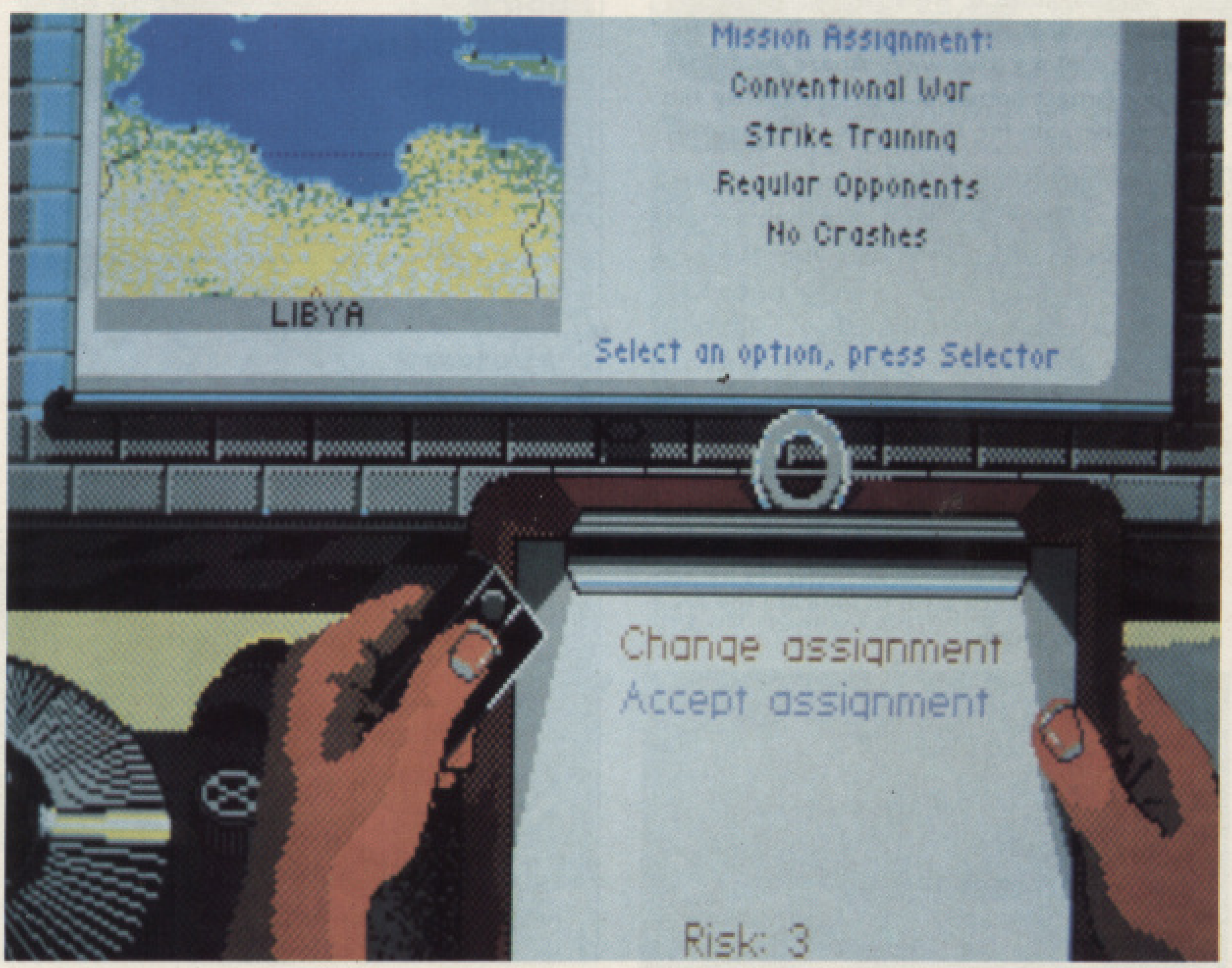
▲ Before you go anywhere you have to know your airplanes. Make a correct identification and you get to pick your own mission; fail and one is picked for you. Fortunately the manual carries a guide to all the aircraft found throughout the program.

As far as flight 'n' fight simulation goes, **F-19 Stealth Fighter** from Microprose is hard to beat. It comes from the same stable that gave an ungrateful world **Gunship** and **F-15 Strike Eagle**, and very little can live in the same RAM chips with it.

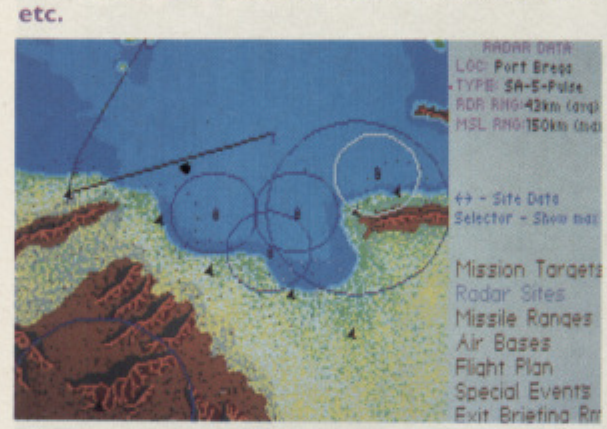
The reasons for this enthusiasm are twofold: firstly, there's incredible depth – I fully expect to be playing this for years before having flown all the missions – and secondly the graphics show off the capabilities of the PC's VGA in its best light. In this latter respect it's particularly strong, leaving 'realistic' packages such as Microsoft's Flight Simulator III a long way behind.

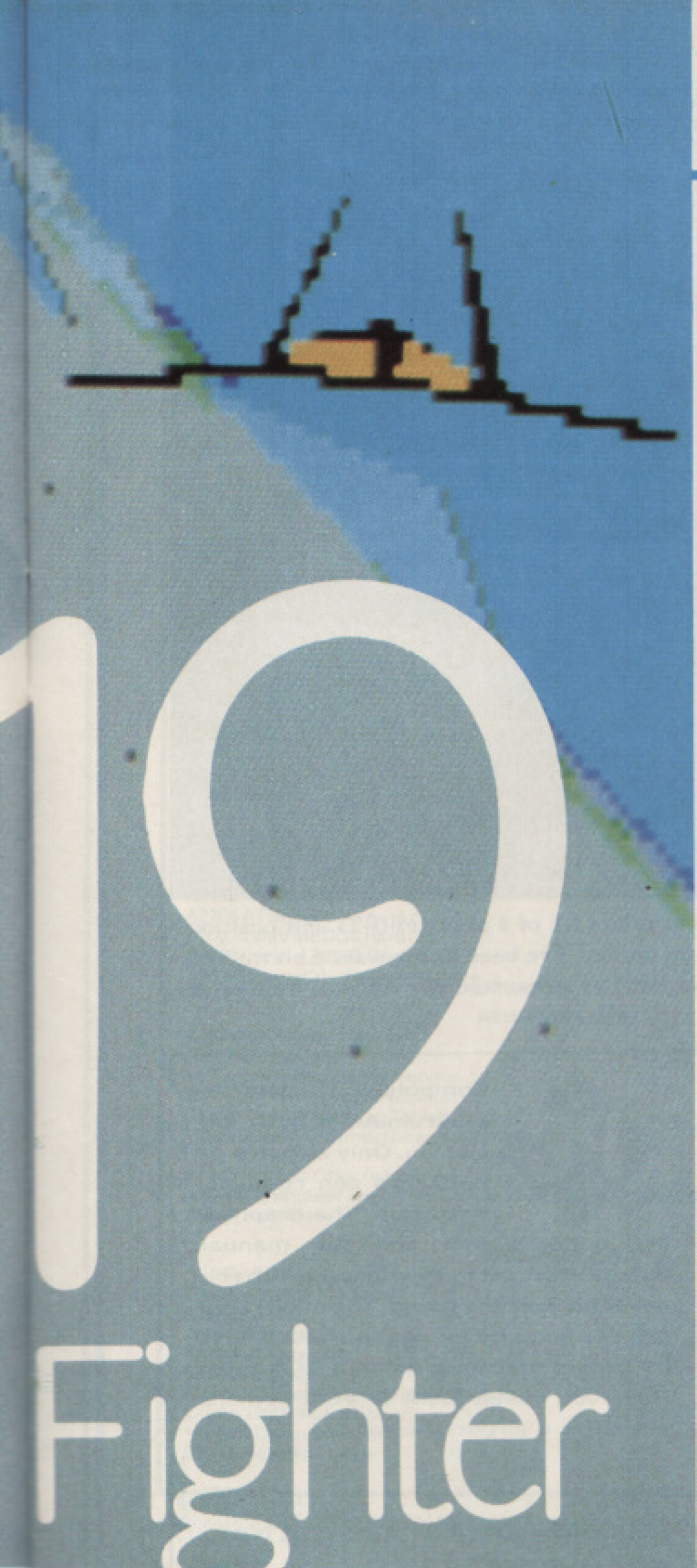
In real-life the F-19 is a high-tech warplane almost impossible to pick up on radar thanks to a combination of its shape, the materials from which it is constructed, an array of radar-jamming devices, and its low-flying capabilities. It was designed at Lock-

▼ Right. We're off to Libya, and as you can see I've selected strike training in a conventional war situation with regular opponents and no crashes (as opposed to easy or realistic landings). One of the nice things about F-19 is that it can be quite forgiving. In training, for instance, if you get clobbered by a missile, you don't have to go back and start all over again, but can carry on and hopefully manage to avoid the next one.



▼ During the intelligence briefing you'll learn about the enemy's defensive capabilities. The radar data at top right refers to the radar station encircled in white, and similar information is available about all radar stations, missile sites, air bases etc.





heed's famous 'Skunk Works' in Burbank, California, and is used primarily for ground strikes behind enemy lines.

The program offers a choice of operations in any of four theatres of war: Libya, the Persian Gulf, the Nothern Cape and Central Europe. Missions are flown either during Cold War, when clandestine missions are carried out, Limited War or all-out Conventional War and you can be flying against green, regular, veteran or elite opponents.

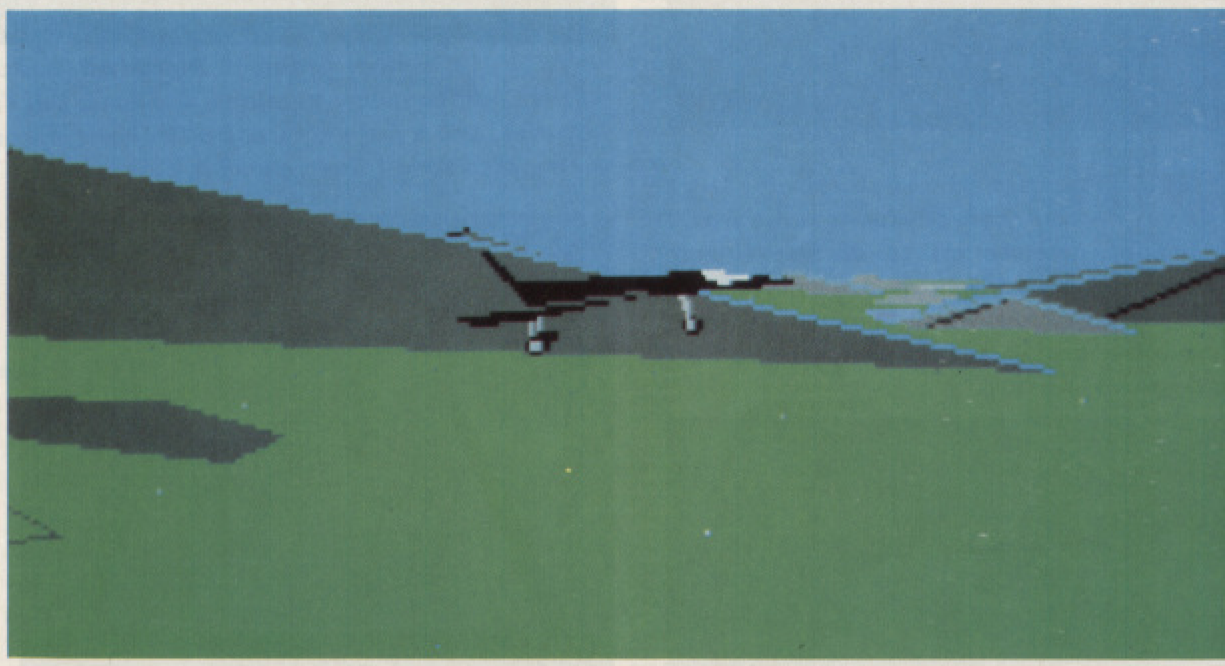
These factors determine the difficulty level, with even the simpler levels posing a real problem. Thankfully, there's a training mode where you don't pay for mistakes with your life (although your reputation is likely to suffer).

The documentation provided is indispensable. There's a complete keyboard overlay, so you don't have to remember which key or combination of keys does what, and the manual is little short of breathtaking. It includes a complete training programme, operating instructions, techniques and tactics (including radar and stealth tactics), comprehensive military information about the four theatres of war, and exhaustive information about weapons and warplanes – both ours and theirs.

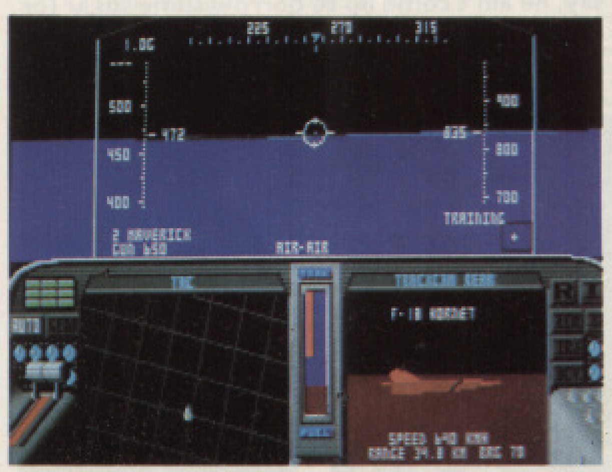
Microprose claims that F-19 is simple to learn but difficult to master – and that's a fair summation. As your flying improves, you get promoted within the Air Force. Unfortunately, this also means that you're allocated tougher missions.



At this point you can review the intelligence briefing, re-arm your jalopy or ask to be sent on a different mission, but this is regarded as a singularly cowardly act.

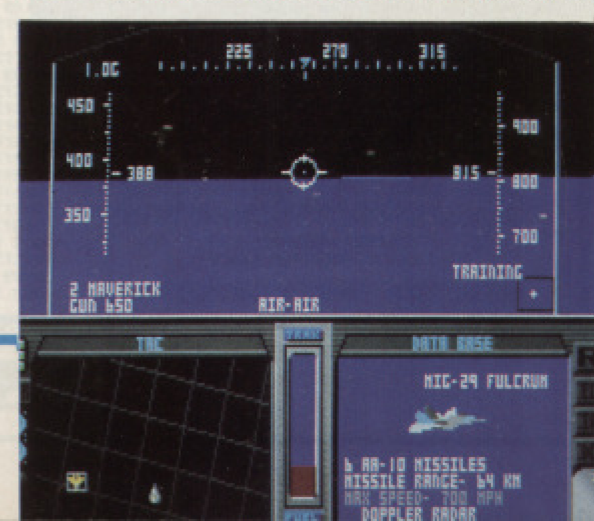


We'll just let that chappie take off ahead of us while we check out our waypoints, which are pre-selected points mapping our way to the targets and back. If you get diverted from the planned course the waypoints can be changed and reset during the flight. The onboard computer has already sniffed out a surface-air missile station.

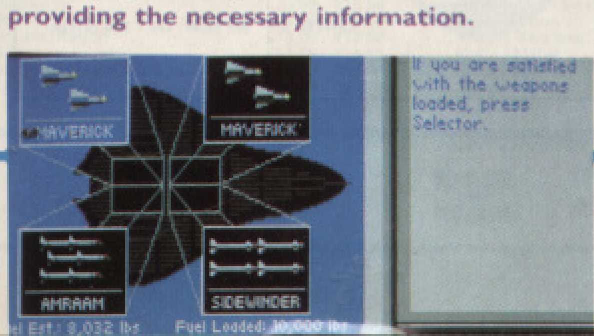


Now it's getting interesting. With the left-hand CRT switched from the satellite map to tactical mode, I can see my position relative to other targets. With the HUD now in air-air mode, missile tracking cameras have picked up an F-18 to the rear, but he's too far away to be concerned with. The red bar in the centre tells me I'm showing far too much to ground radar stations.

This is a more interesting customer, a MiG-29 to the left. The onboard computer carries information about his armaments, speed, range etc, shown on the right-hand CRT. To shoot anything down, incidentally, you've got to get it in front of you.



The default armament is your crew chief's guess as to what is best, and he's usually not too far wrong. You can change it if you want, with the manual providing the necessary information.



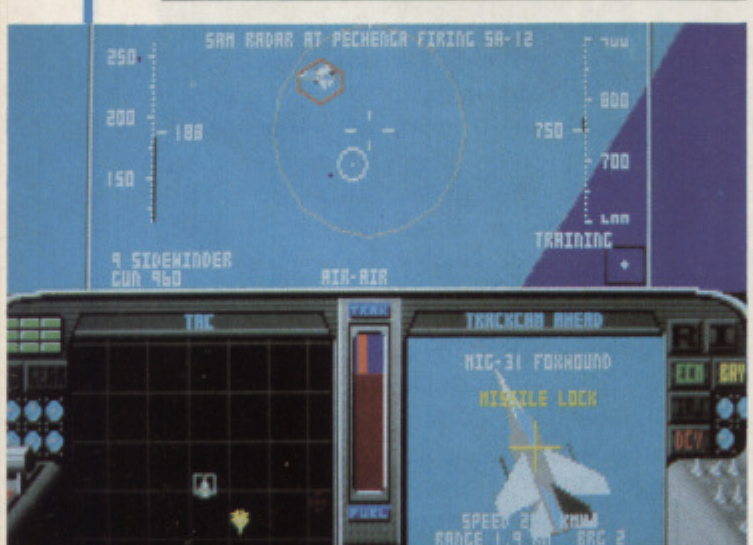
REVIEW

Er, moving swiftly on to another mission, this time by day, here we are from behind at full tilt over the Sahara. Gadafy, no doubt, is quaking in his boots.

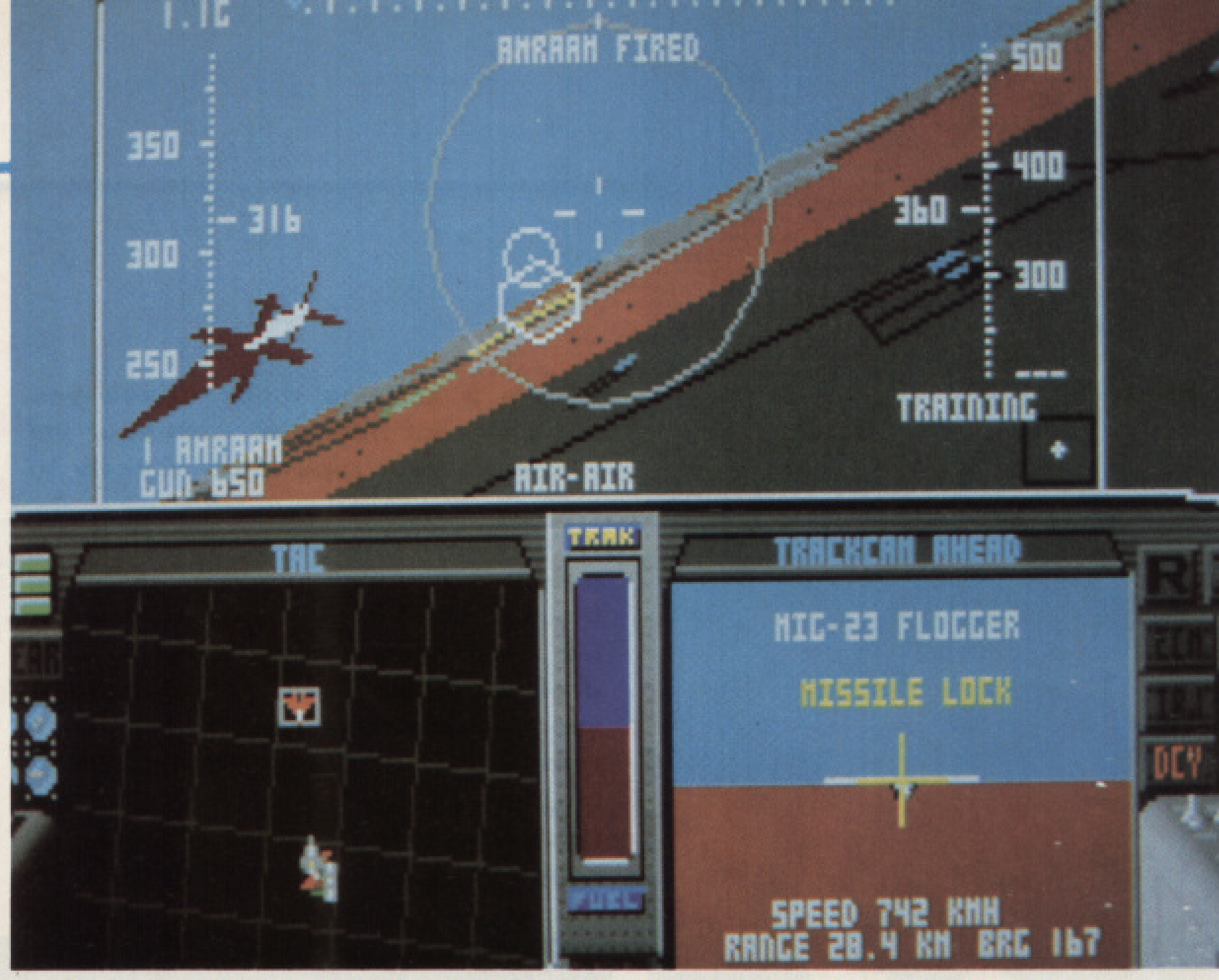


Despite the disturbingly large numbers of bandits in the area, I nonetheless venture off to do battle over darkest Finland (or birghtest, depending on the time of year), this time looking on from outside the aircraft as I take off, afterburners blazing.

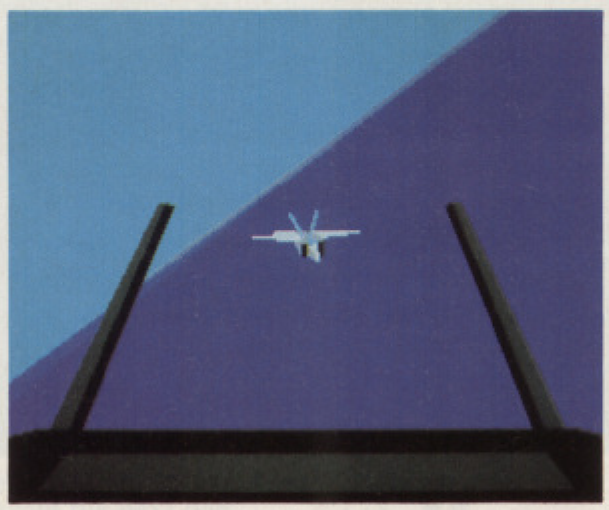




With a little shimmy called "the Scissors Turn", learned from the God-send manual, I soon get on his tail, but just as I loose a Sidewinder, one of the ground stations shoots at me. I told you this was a hairy place – and this is only a training mission against regular class opponents, for Pete's sake!

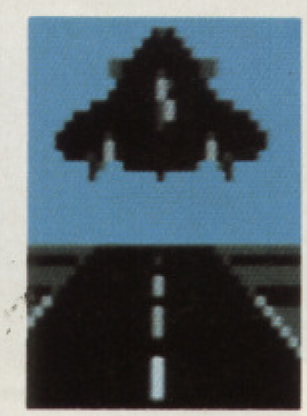


Another missile is dispatched, this time to take care of a pesky MiG-23. His position relative to mine is shown on the Tactical display. I've been in the wars a bit myself, however, and a red indicator on the right warns me that I've exhausted my store of decoys, so perhaps it's time I was 'opping it.

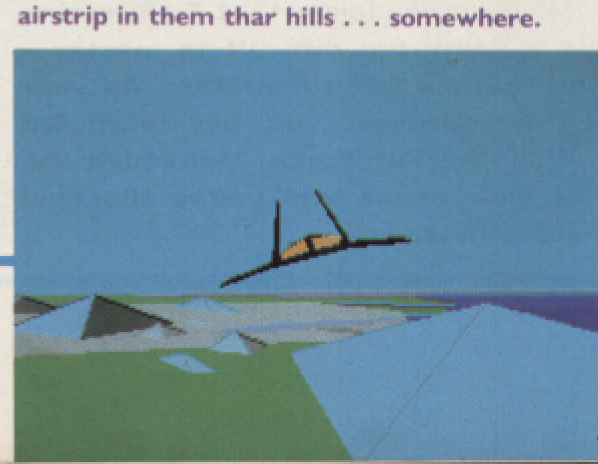


Sure enough, a quick peek out the back window reveals a MiG-31 Foxhound interceptor on my tail. And, as they say, he ain't come up to borrow some sugar (or a Diet Pepsi for that matter).





So I say, in time-honoured tradition, "Let's get the Hell out of here," and point her nose for home. There's an airstrip in them thar hills . . . somewhere.



PC Compulsive, addictive and ruinous to your social life. Only a couple of packages can compare with this. The graphics are quite superb and the manual makes enthralling reading, even if you never go near the game. The only flaw I can see is that a lot of the effect is lost by slower machines using a GCA card. However, faster EGA & VGA owners are in for a airborne treat.

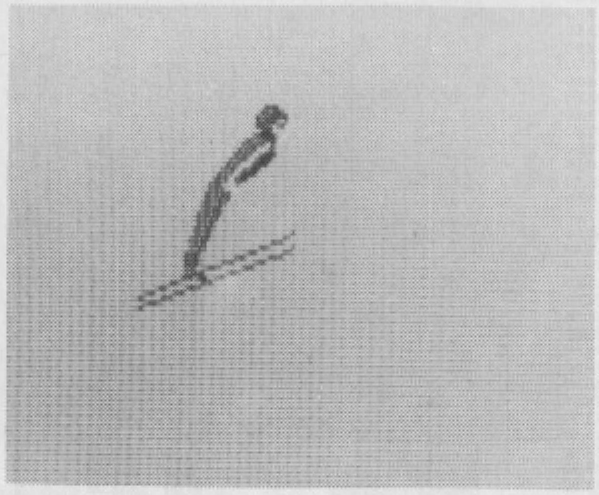
PRICE	£39.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	68%
PLAYABILITY	83%
VALUE	90%

OVERALL 91%

ST Although Commodore owners won't see a finished product until late Summer, the development team is already claiming that it's moving faster and looking even better than the IBM-compatible model.

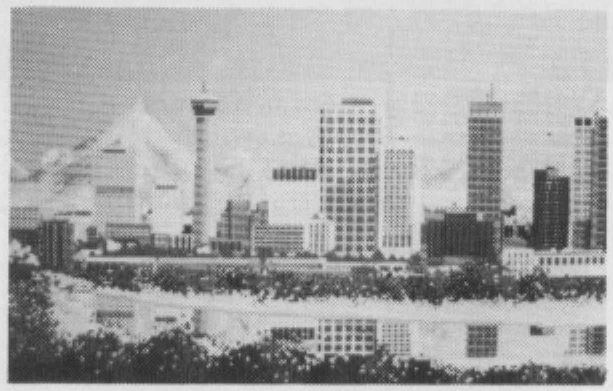
A This version is due for simultaneous release with the Amiga product, however no details of price or availability have been released as yet.

The Games: Winte



▲ **SKI JUMP: One of the three events that has been redesigned since its first appearance in Winter Games. As before, the event has been split into two sections; Launch and Landing.**

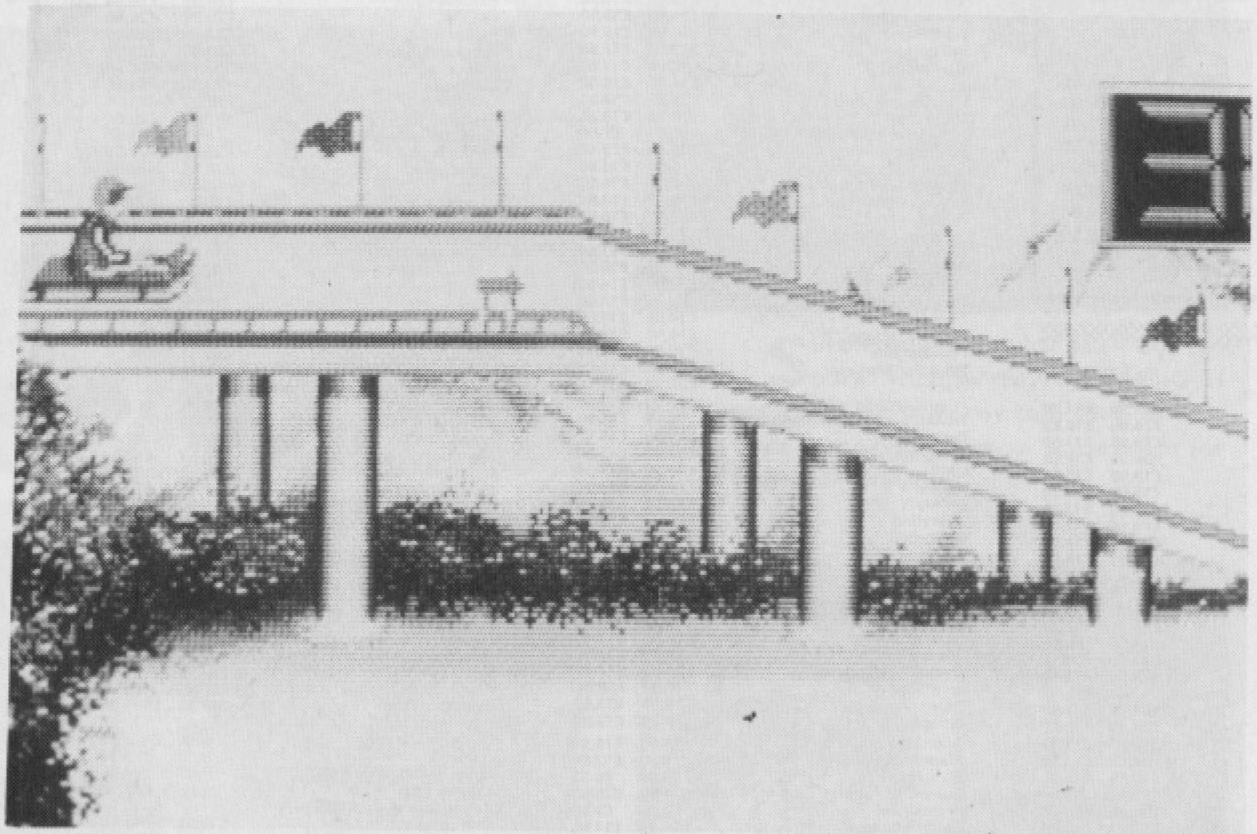
Brian Nesbitt waxes his skis, wipes his 'goggles' and recites a chorus of 'Fly Eddie fly' as Epyx's second snowy selection of games arrives on the piste.



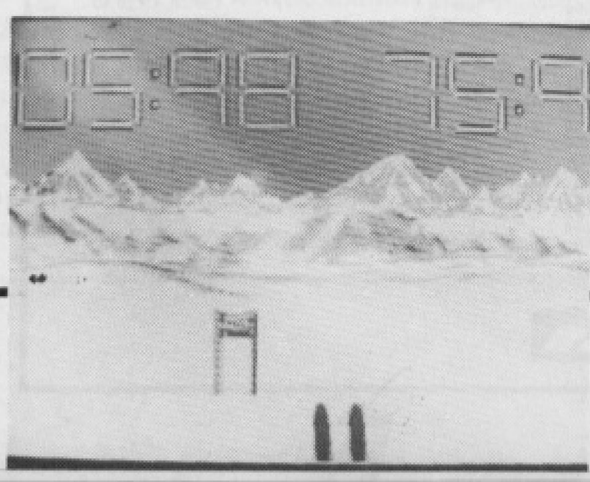
The latest in a long line of sports compendiums to be converted from their original 8-bit formats whisks you off to snowy mountain climes for some arctic antics played over seven events — four of which are original and three which have been redesigned since their first appearance in Epyx's earlier Winter Games.

In typical Epyx style the games are complemented by opening, closing and awards ceremonies complete with Canadian mounties and a fireworks display.

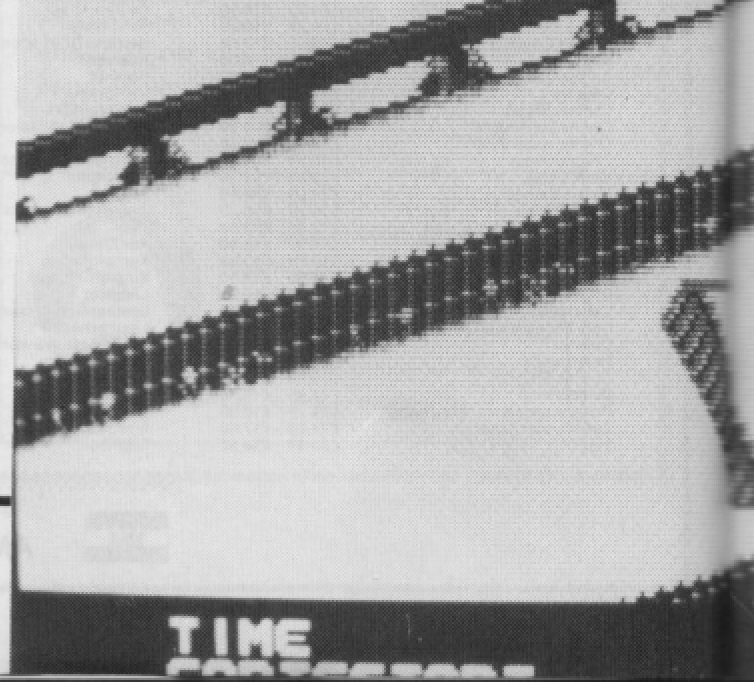
▼ **SLALOM: The first of the three one-on-one events, against either a friend or a computer pacer. The players face off on separate but identical slalom runs. Each run has a long row of flag-gates (the exact number being determined by the length of the race) to weave through, with extra speed gained by skiing close to the flags.**



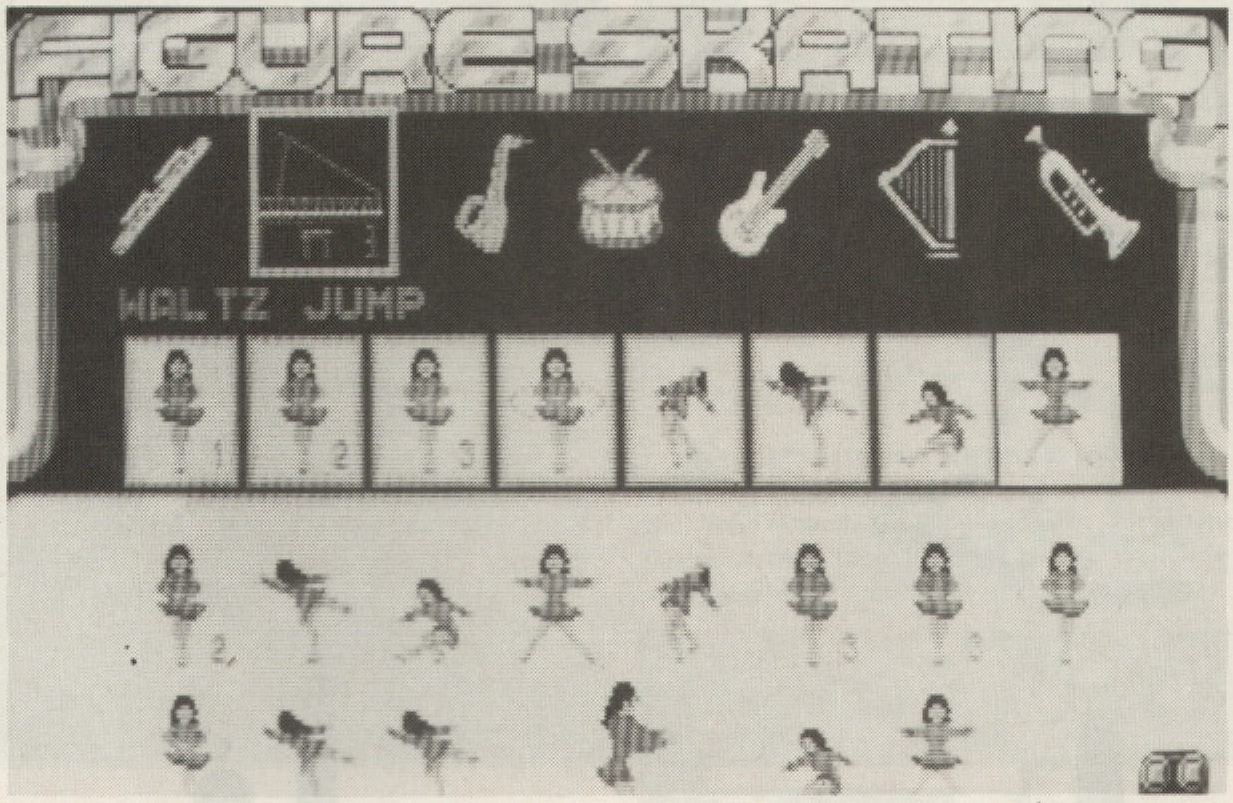
▲ **THE LUGE: Not one for the faint of heart. The player boards a tiny toboggan (not much bigger than a tea-tray) and attempts to navigate a 1,000 metre downhill course. The track is represented by roughly 20 static flick screen displayed in turn as the player whizzes past. It's impossible to crash, but if the turns are taken badly, valuable seconds are lost.**



◀ **DOWNHILL: Contestants here face a mile-long high speed trek down a perilous mountainside. The majority of the run sees the player weaving through flag gates, but when a video camera is passed, he can impress the crowd with a few flash flips.**



er Edition



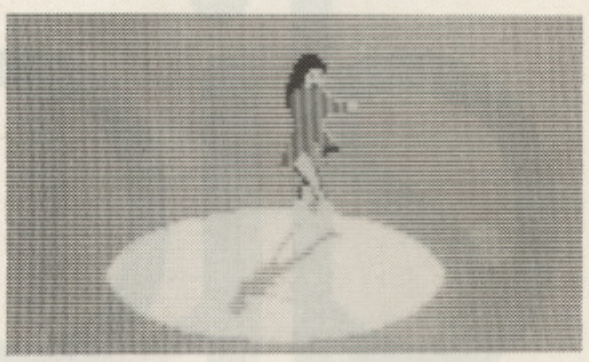
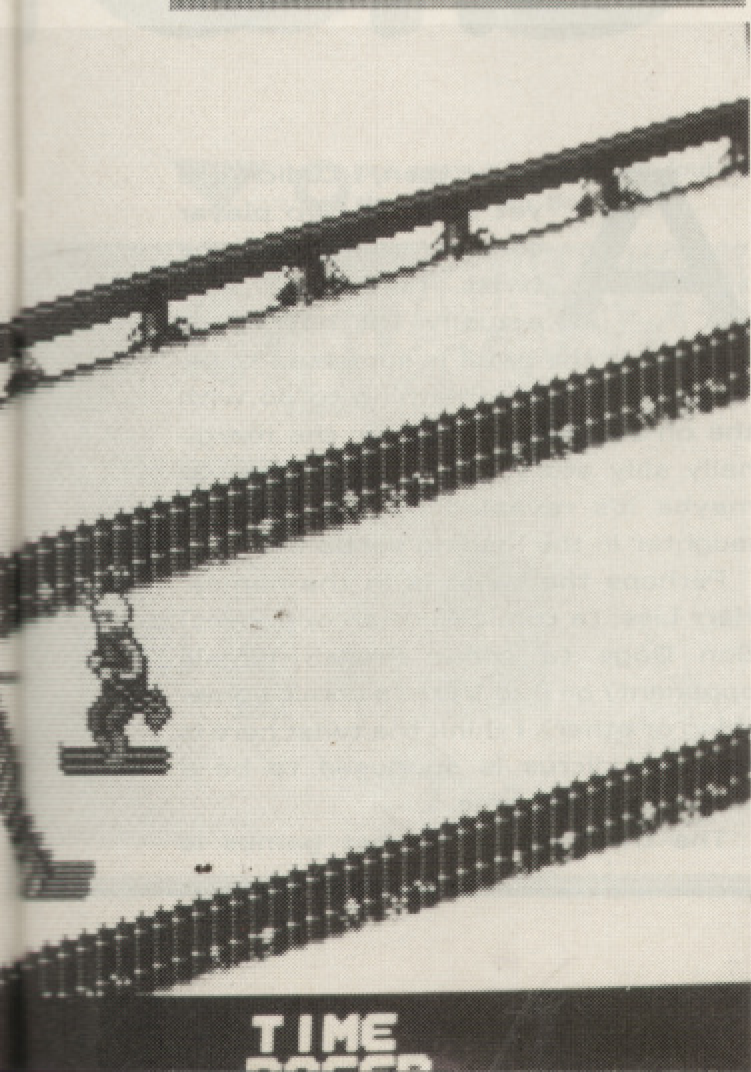
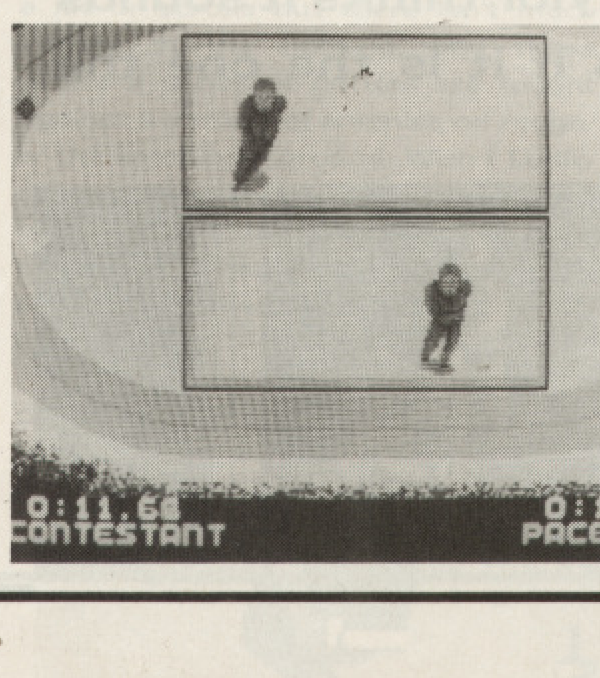
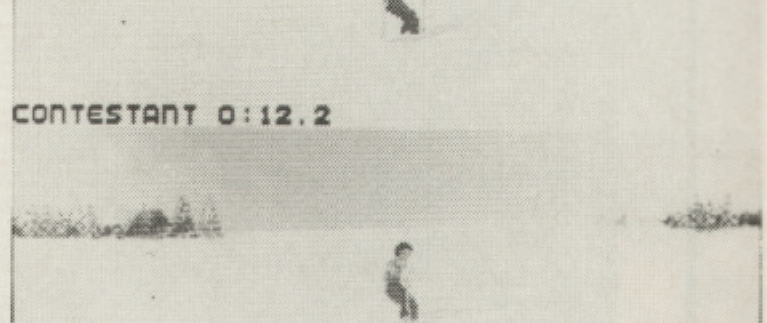


FIGURE SKATING: Unlike this event's first appearance back in Winter Games, you must first choreograph yourself a dance routine by selecting a sequence of moves from a bank of well-known spins, twists and jumps. For a good score, you'll have to perform 10 moves correctly, at least eight of which must be from your routine.



SPEED SKATING: While racing, your skater is depicted twice on screen, firstly on a plan view of the circuit to indicate position, and also from a head-on view to show his movement and speed. Synchronised waggling (as opposed to the frentic Daley Thompson-kind) builds up speed, but care has to be taken around bends to avoid wiping out.





CROSS COUNTRY SKIING: Furious joystick waggling will be of no use here, a slow and steady rhythm is the order of he day. With your opponent breathing down your neck at all times, this is one of the toughest events to complete (let alone win!).

ST

With Winter, World and California games under its belt, Epyx has built up quite a quality reputation for sports simulations – something which sadly hasn't been carried on in the latest edition to the series. There seems to have been little progress or innovation since World Games, and some of the events, (the skating in particular), fail to generate any interest at all due to the sloppy execution (the three events that have been re-written from Winter Games aren't nearly as much fun this time round). I'm not sure whether this is due to Epyx running out of events to simulate or ideas for game design, but if it's the former (and I suspect it is), perhaps they should try something in a different vein. California Games was a good start at getting away from the Olympic Stadium, but this is more of a step backwards.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	57%
SOUND	52%
PLAYABILITY	58%
VALUE	51%

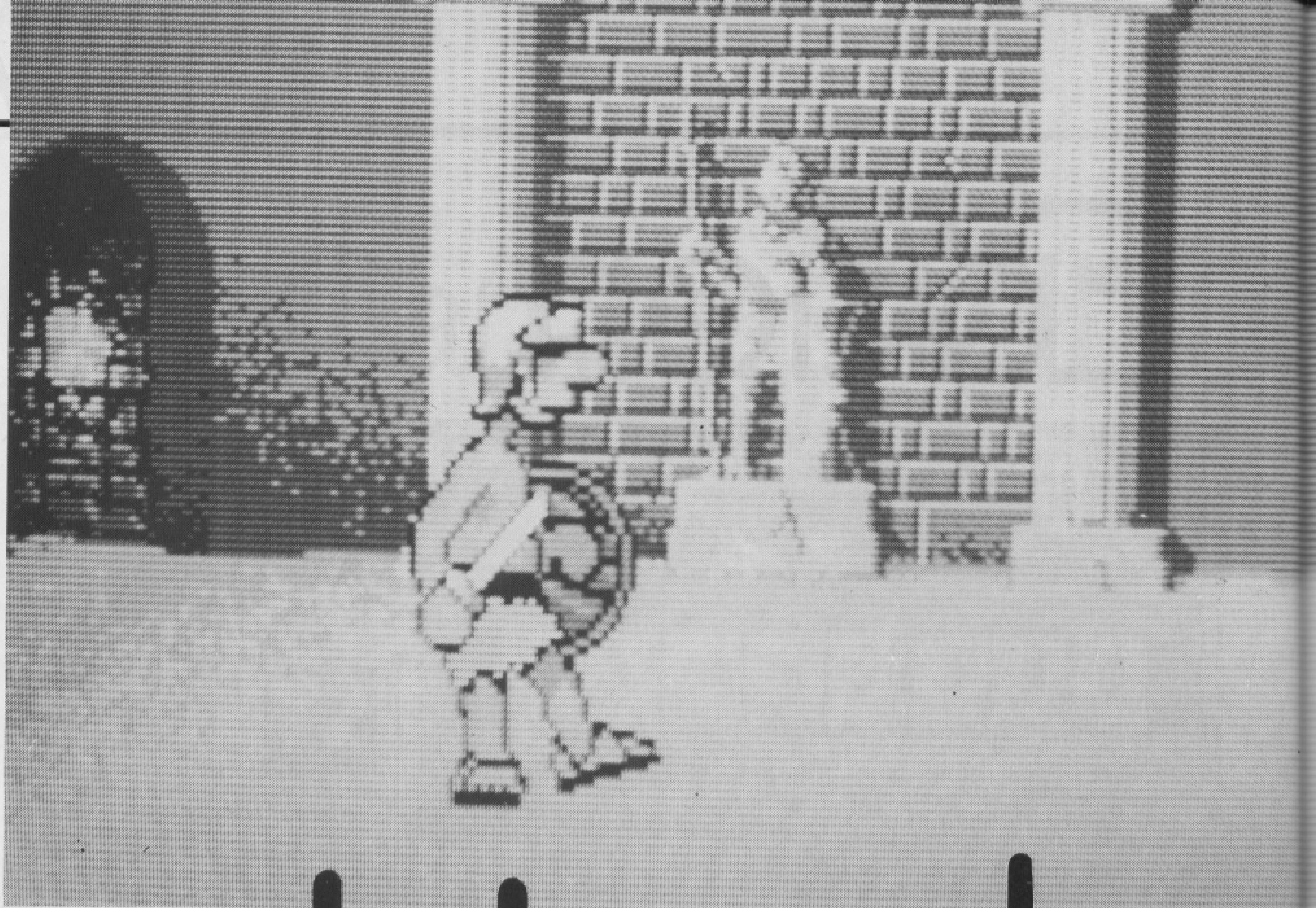
OVERALL 56%

A

Due out now at the same price as the ST, the Amiga version differs only slightly in terms of sound with the same lacklustre gameplay present.

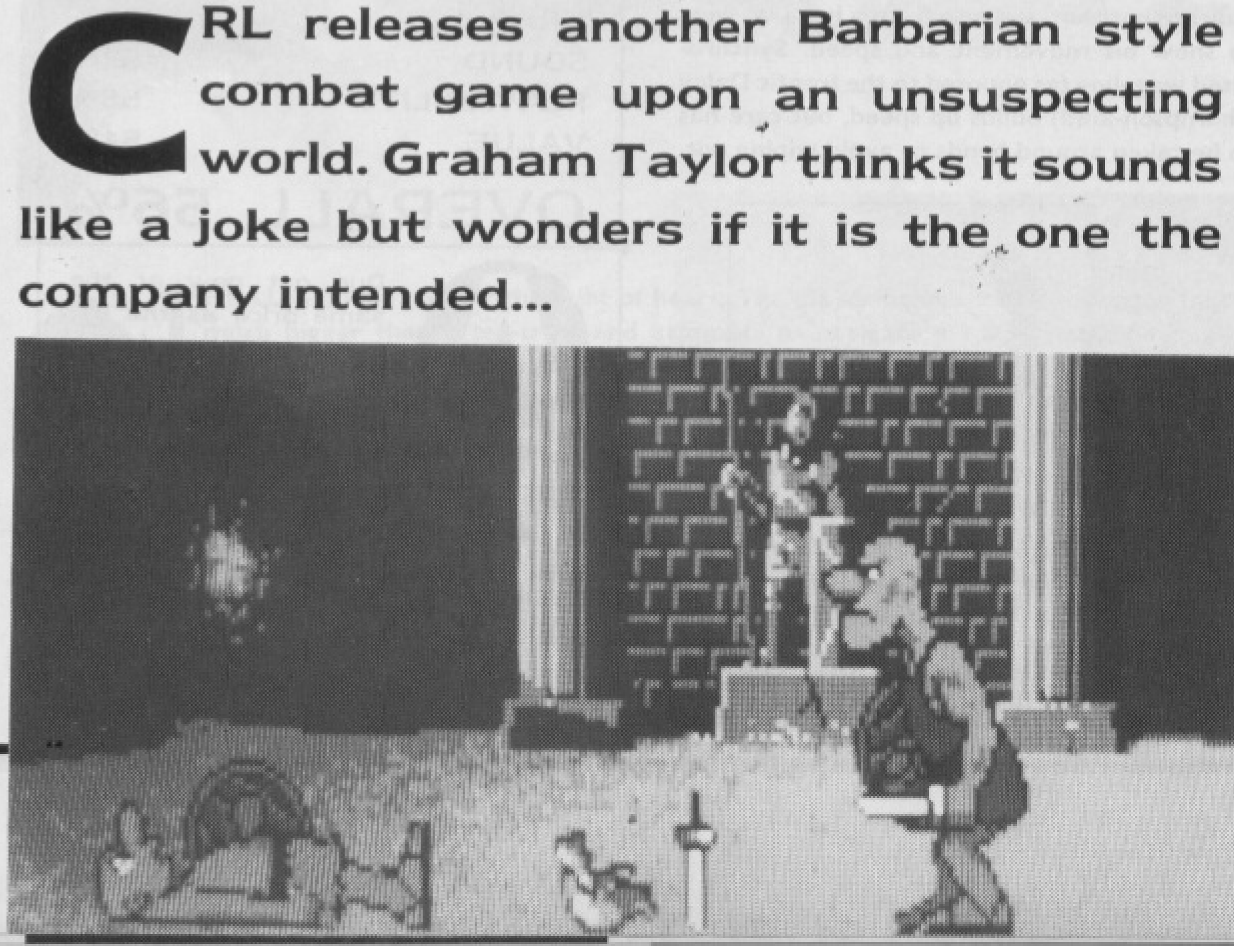
PC

An IBM-compatible compendium is available now at a price of £19.99. No major differences are expected, but just to be sure there's an update next month.



I, Ludic

CRL releases another Barbarian style combat game upon an unsuspecting world. Graham Taylor thinks it sounds like a joke but wonders if it is the one the company intended...

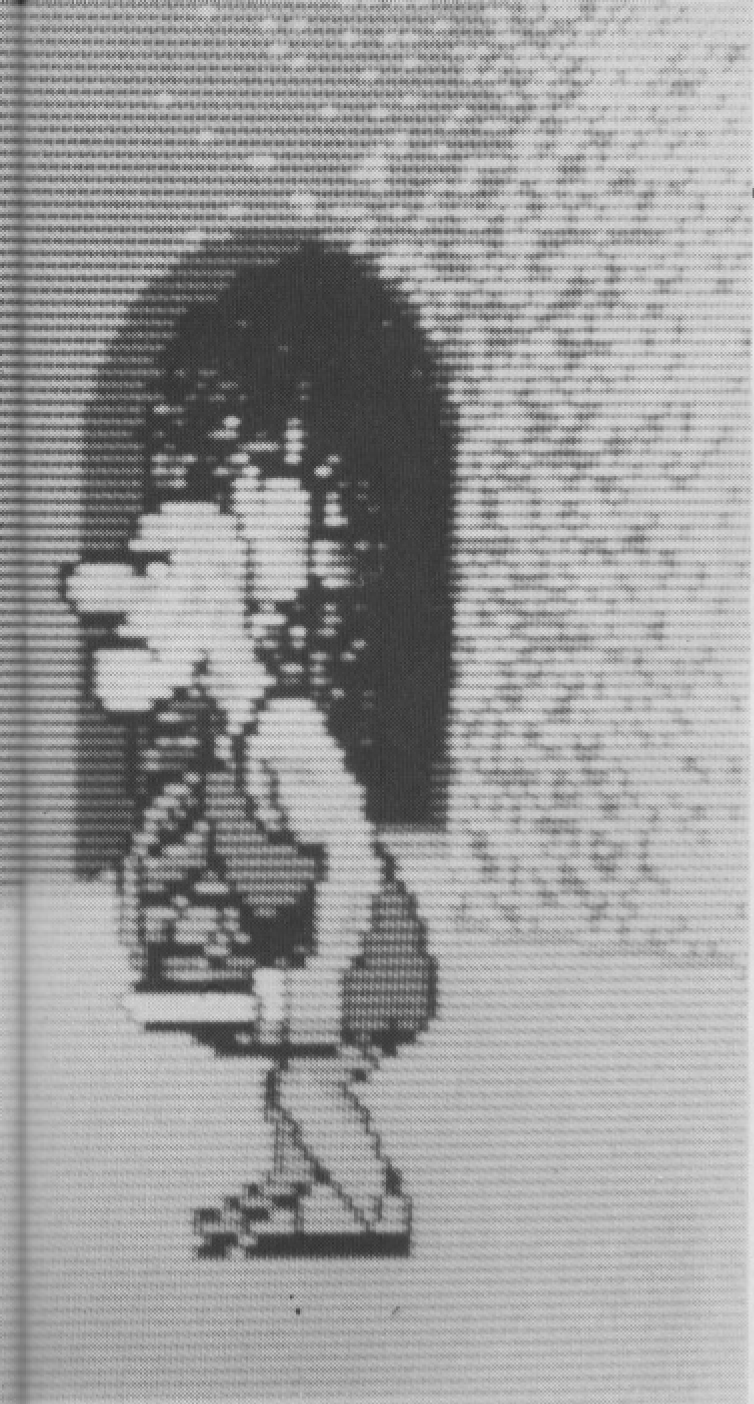


Alright then, **I Ludicrus** is yet another two player combat game, but the twist here is... well actually I'm not at all sure what the twist is supposed to be.

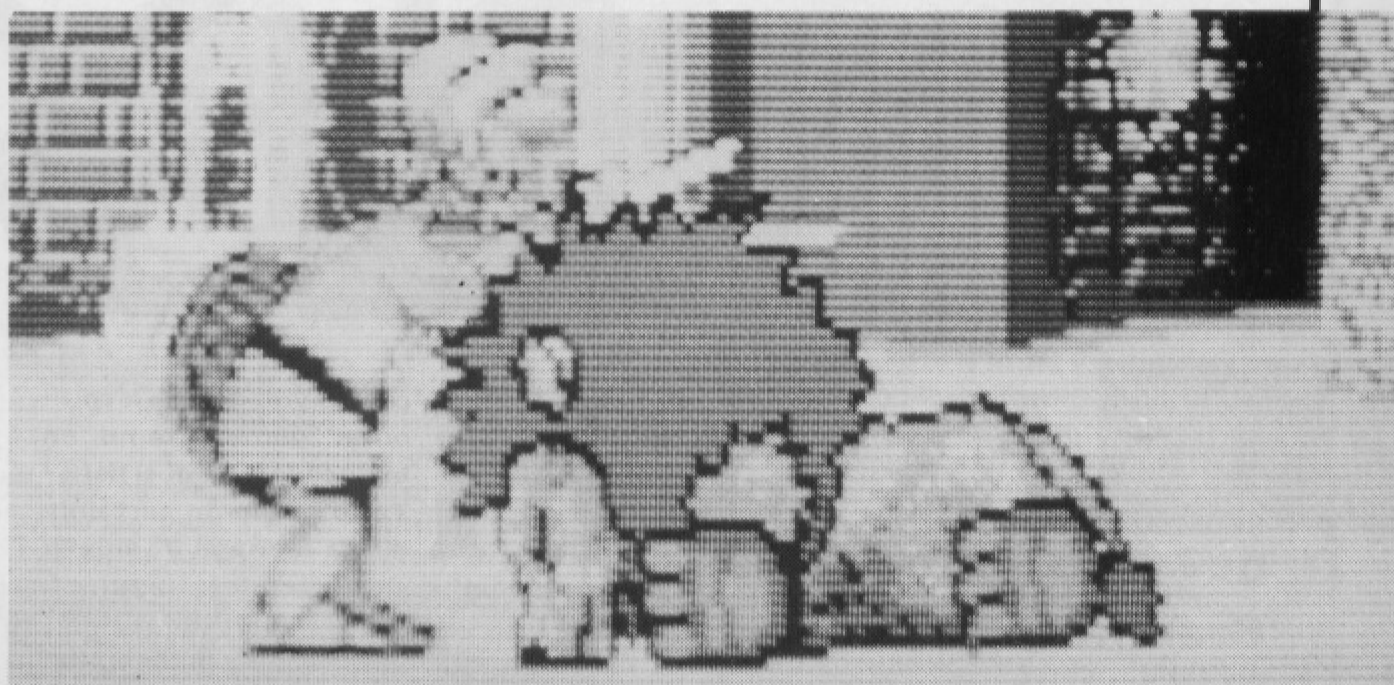
Maybe it has something to do with the oh-so-hilarious title or the marginally silly story in the box blurb. Or maybe it's revealed by the sampled laughter in the loading section.

Perhaps the twist is in the names: Herr Liss, (a comic German opponent) Bon Dage (a comic French female opponent) or Bud Vyzr (a comic something or other). I think the twist here is that **I Ludicrus** is supposed to be a comic combat game.

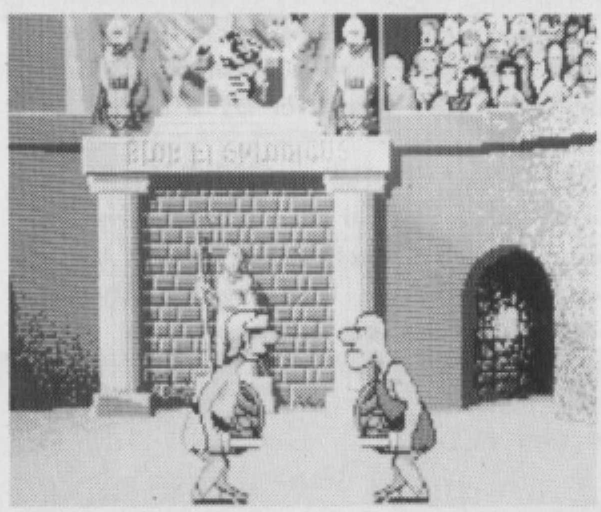
The thing about combat games is



rus

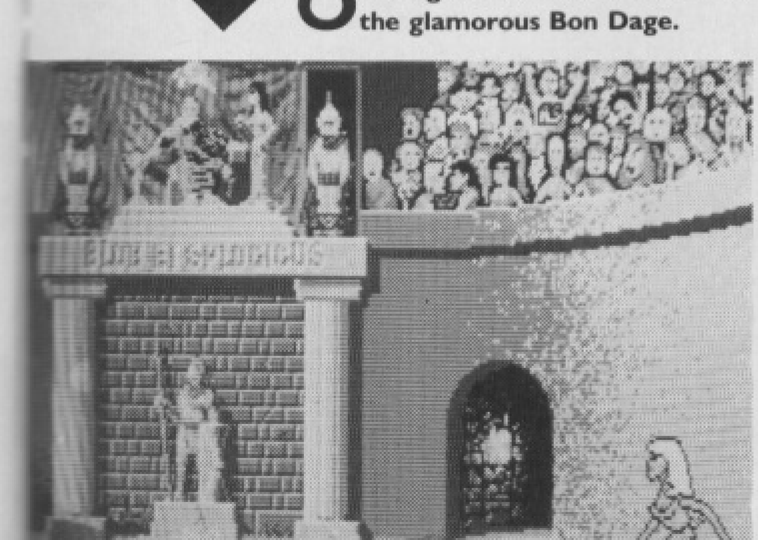


Fail to beat any one of your human opponents and you're thrown to the lions – well, the lion actually. Although Clarence may look like the cuddly type, his cute face hides a nasty set of fangs.



The emperor signals the games to begin and Ludicrous faces off with Herr Liss (hairless – geddit?). Unfortunately the fancy graphics tend to lose some of their glamour when the appalling collision detection becomes apparent.

Once again our hero falls foul of the glamorous Bon Dage.



that there are roughly two types, those where the background changes a lot or scrolls but there isn't much variety in the fighting, and those where a series of battles are fought against a variety of enemies on roughly the same background. With I Ludicrus you appear to get the worst of both worlds – few opponents against the same old background (ie a Roman-style Ampitheatre complete with emperor).

There are single player (against the computer) and two player options, the computer plays very well though, and as is usually the case, the two player option is more enjoyable.

ST The graphics are good – excellent even – but the fighting style however lets it down as there aren't enough different enemies and there's never any real impression of contact. The range of sound effects is mostly limited to sampled 'errks' and 'uggggs' when a sword thrust hits home (and speeded up 'errks' and 'ugggs' when sword thrusts hit home on your female opponent). These generally sound OK, but once again there isn't that much variety to them – one errk per opponent more or less, though the Lion roar is rather tasteful. There is some challenge in the fighting – for example I didn't discover one or two moves which always succeeded (like in some games I could name...).

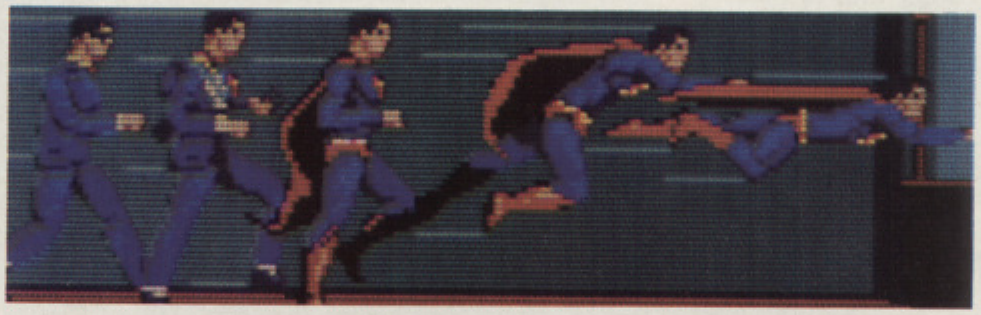
If pure combat is what attracts you maybe this game has something going for it. If you're looking for anything else... forget it.

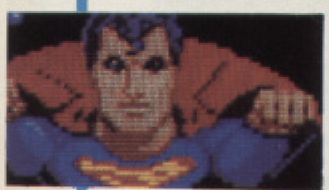
PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	35%
VALUE	55%

OVERALL 60%

A Almost identical to the Amiga, except the samples are better. This version is at least a couple of months away, and according to a CRL spokesperson, is likely to feature identical graphics, improved sound – and hopefully better playability in the process.

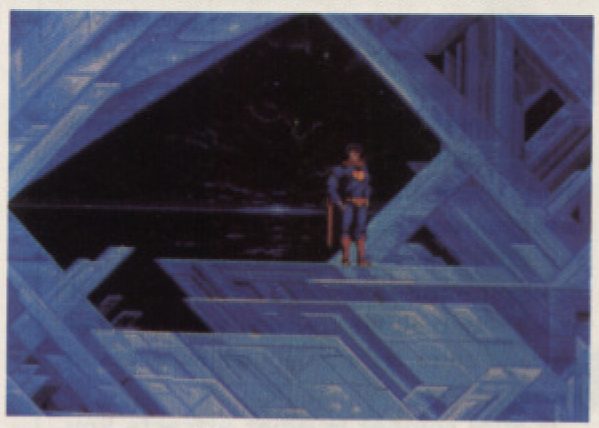
Supe





Is it a bird, is it a plane? No, it's Ciáran Brennan, discarding his contact lenses and making for the nearest call box...

Superman can't die, but his power meter must constantly be monitored as a total loss of strength causes the Man of Steel to fly off to his Fortress of Solitude to sulk while his enemies take over the world.

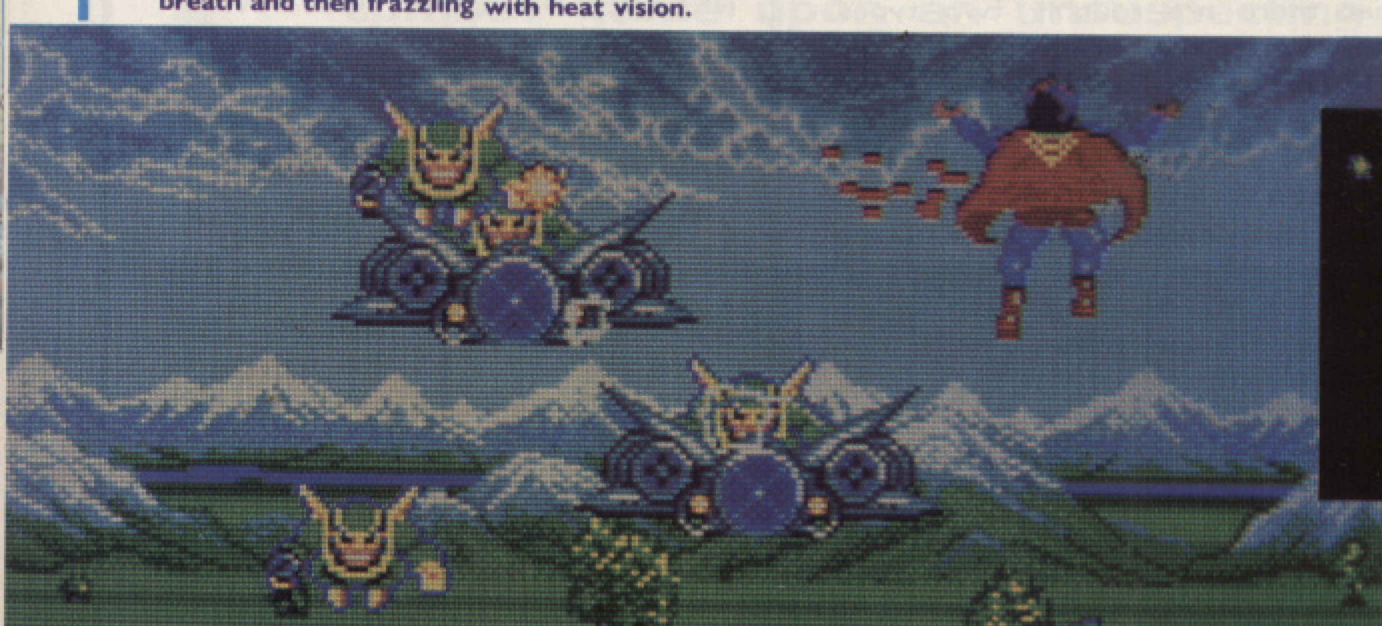


How do you design a computer game around an invincible superhero? Taito's coin-op certainly didn't manage it, simply dropping the character into a run-of-the-mill scrolling beat 'em up with no attempt to incorporate such essential elements as Heat Vision, Kryptonite or Lex Luthor.

American software house First Star also failed to make the grade with its 8-bit incarnations released over three years ago. Its latest attempt however, licensed by Tyne Soft, includes these elements in an eight level multi-load format linked together by a series of 'comic' pages.

Punches, kicks, superbreath and heat vision are all part of Superman's arsenal, with each represented by a separate energy level which should only be exceeded with extreme caution. For example, should the heat vision power run out completely and the player continue to use this weapon then it starts to make a large hole in the overall power meter and seriously weakens the hero.

GAME ONE: En route to the STAR Laboratories, Superman encounters the advance guard of Darkseid's invading Para-Demon army. Flying into the screen in the mould of Space Harrier, Superman strives to destroy the original demons and their accomplices who appear through a hole in the fabric of space and time. Either mounted on Concussion Cannons or flying solo, the demons are best dealt with by blowing back with superbreath and then frazzling with heat vision.





GAME TWO: Lois Lane and Governor Lee are being held hostage on board The Atlantis, anchored in Metropolis Harbour. Walking and flying along a scrolling deck scene, Superman does battle with terrorist after terrorist – all decked out in the nattiest of body armour. Kicks, punches and blasts of heat vision put paid to these characters – but watch out for heavily armoured hover-bikes.

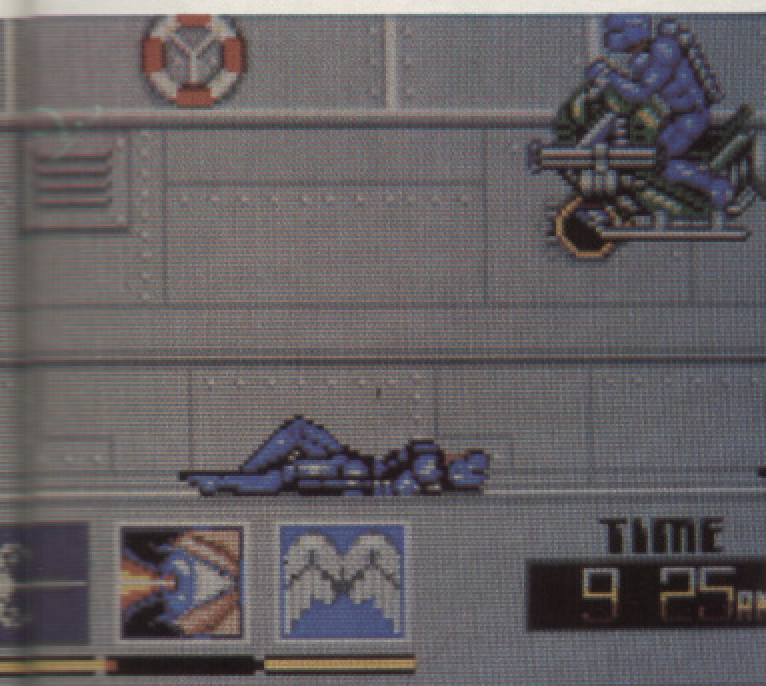
GAME THREE: In order to save the world, Superman must now escort the Shuttle carrying Professor Gorwin to the STAR Satellite – which means negotiating a vertically scrolling course with Kryptonite debris mixing with the normal space junk to cause the superhero even more discomfort).



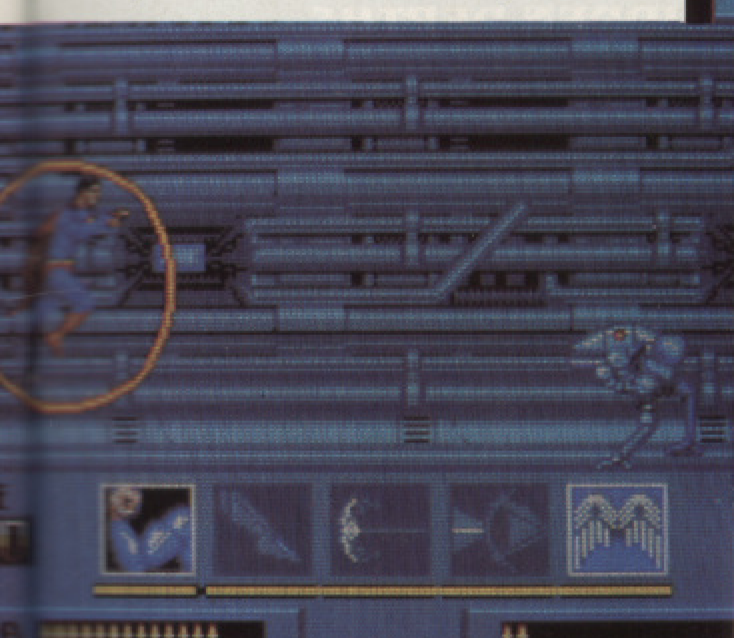


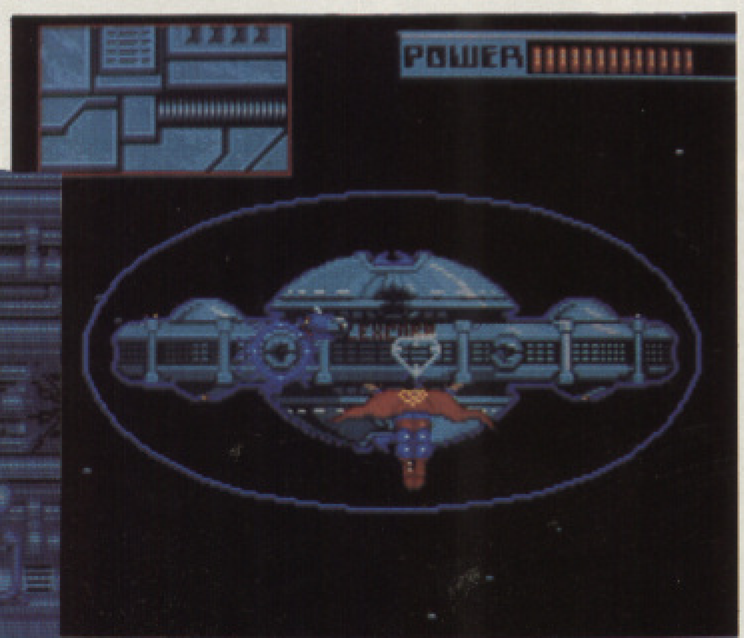
SUPERMAN THE MAN OF STEEL

erman



GAME FOUR: Superman enters the satellite's airlock and proceeds down the corridors towards the control room. The system's defence robots are out of control and have wrongly identified him as an illegal intruder. The robots first shots aren't fatal, instead they simply trap the superhero in a flexible bubble from which he must punch his way or face a hail of more deadly fire.





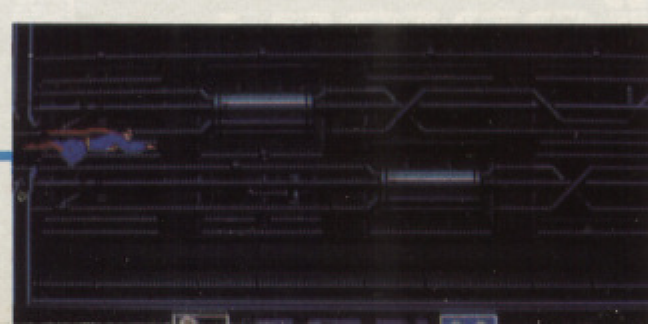
GAME FIVE: Before the Professor can get to work, another asteroid storm appears on the scanners. Apart from the fact that Superman is protecting the Satellite instead of the shuttle, this sub-game is identical to Game Three.

GAME SIX: Once again Superman heads off into the asteroid storm, this time to be confronted by Darkseid's Mini-Robots. The mechanical terrors emanate from a huge mother robot which awaits our hero at the end of the level.



GAME SEVEN: The unidentified satellite is protected by a huge force field – and worse still, it belongs to Lex Luthor. Superman is met by a barrage of gunfire and heat seeking missiles. Dodging this fire, he uses his telescopic vision to examine the space station and one by one knock out its vital sections.

GAME EIGHT: Bursting through the space station's wall, Superman once again finds himself back in Game Four, with nothing to stop him saving the world but another fight along a scrolling corridor.



A There's nothing quite as irritating as a game which fails to live up to its potential – especially one which comes as close to hitting the mark as this one. First Star's adaptation of the world's most popular superhero is certainly better than the recent coin-op effort, but it ultimately fails to get the balance right between playability and irritability and ends up falling on the side of the latter. The eight games are quite nice in their own right (even if repetition does tend to creep in towards the end), but the fact that each must be completed before the next is begun means that most people will end up stuck on the first disk. The look and sound are both well up to the task in hand – except maybe in the between game comic sections – and otherwise the presentation is first rate. **Superman – The Man of Steel** is one of the few licences which actually takes care to incorporate the original character's features and style. It's a pity the execution is flawed.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	64%
VALUE	68%
OVERALL	**69%**

ST Although it's common for there to be an aural difference between Commodore and Atari games, the degree of difference is rarely this great. In some ways the ST **Superman** is better than the Amiga version (for instance the slightly slower pace improves the playability), but the sound is so bad that it tends to let the whole show down.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	77%
SOUND	62%
PLAYABILITY	59%
VALUE	67%
OVERALL	**66%**

PC We have yet to see this version, but Tyne Soft informs us that it's CGA-only, costs £24.95 and should be out now.

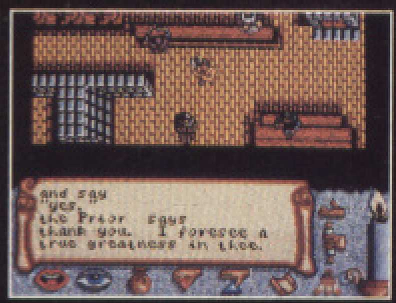


Commodore Amiga



The Knight one of three character classes.

Atari ST



Converse through simple commands and menus.

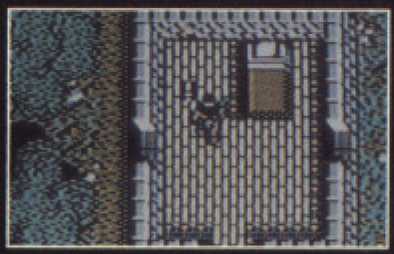
DISCOVER AN ARCADE ADVENTURE WITH HIDDEN DEPTHS

Discover Times Of Lore, Origin's first adventure on cassette. Acclaimed British designer Chris Roberts has taken the best of arcade and adventure – fast and furious combat, stunning graphics and animation, unrelenting danger and challenge – and introduced the depth of a classic fantasy role playing game.

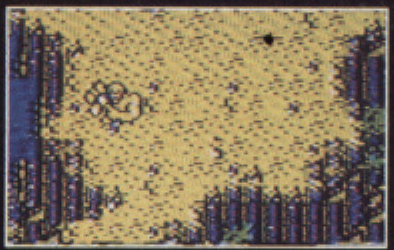
Entirely joystick driven, Times Of Lore continuously tests your combat skills while you gradually become involved in a compelling plot. With 13,000 screen locations, a powerful but easy-to-use menu and icon interface, scores of interactive characters and music by Martin Galway, it ventures further than other arcade adventures.

Origin have broken new ground in Times Of Lore. Isn't it time you did too? Available for: C64/128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Spectrum 48/128K Cassette £9.95, Spectrum +3 Disk £14.95, Amstrad 464/6128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Atari ST £24.95, IBM/PC & Compatibles £24.95, Apple £19.95, Commodore Amiga £24.95.

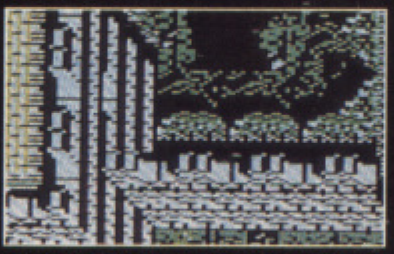
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C64/128



Spectrum



Amstrad

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ORIGIN

Origin, MicroProse, 2 Market Place, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA. Tel: 0666 54326

TechnoCop



The old-fashioned bobby may not have been afraid to give offenders a good clip around the ear, but in the near future they're going to have to be a little tougher than that. Tony Dillon gets to grips with modern technology in Gremlin's game of futuristic law enforcement.

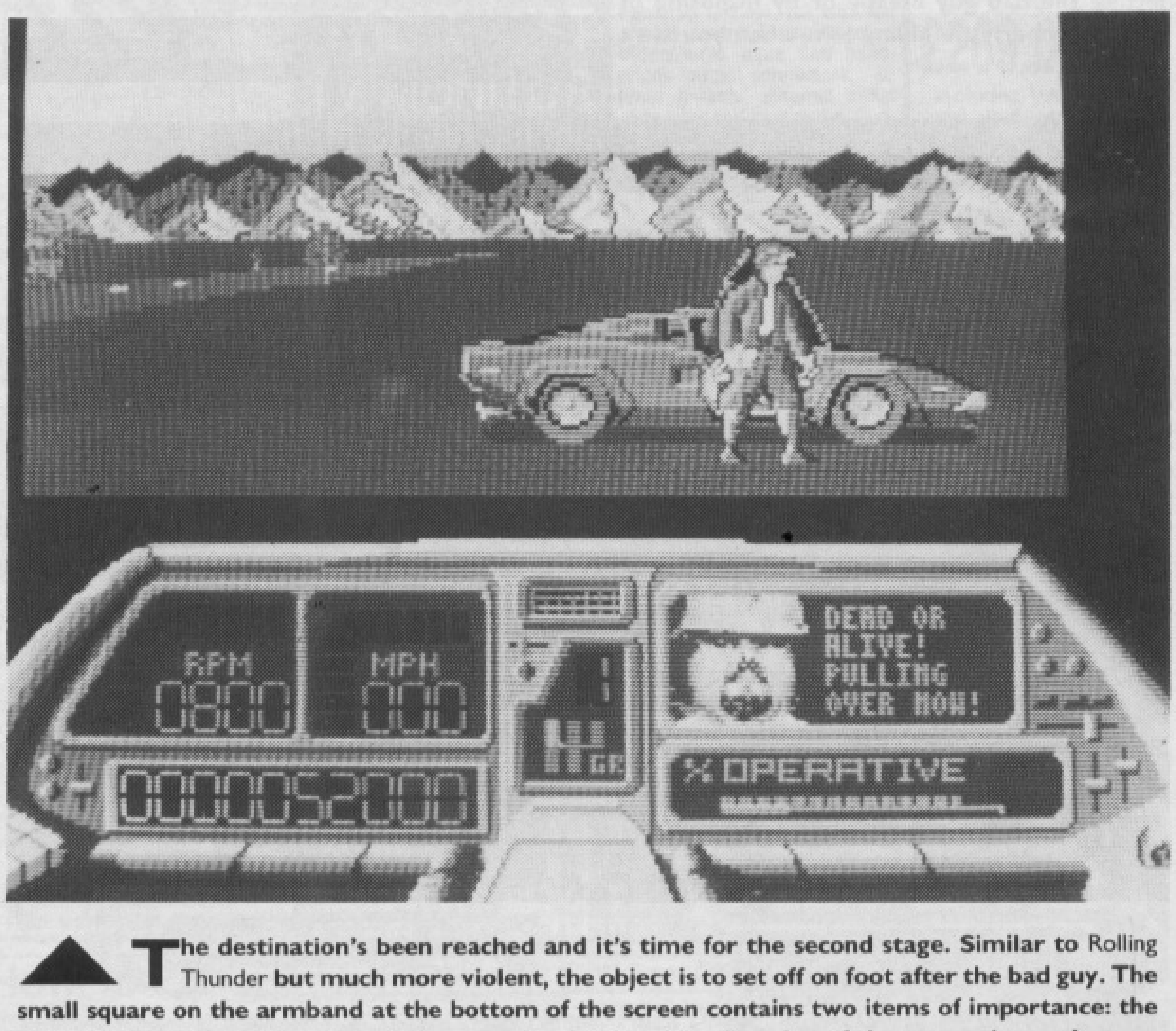
Forget all that namby-pamby 'Dead or alive, you're coming with me' rubbish – this is what future law enforcement is all about. Crime may be bad now, but in the near future it's going to get a lot worse.

Step into a future where granny thefts and armed robbery abound, and where fewer and fewer people are joining the force. You are a lone bobby, with just your and your shiny new Ferrari VMAX set against the evils of the world.

Each mission unfolds in two stages. The first of which has you behind the wheel patrolling the highways, Mad Max style. The on-screen message display gives details of your adversary, such as the felony commited, and arrest orders such as 'kill on sight' or simply 'stop him'. There's nothing to stop you from getting from A to B – except of course the opposing cars. It is possible to outrun them, but getting up enough speed without hitting anything can be a problem.

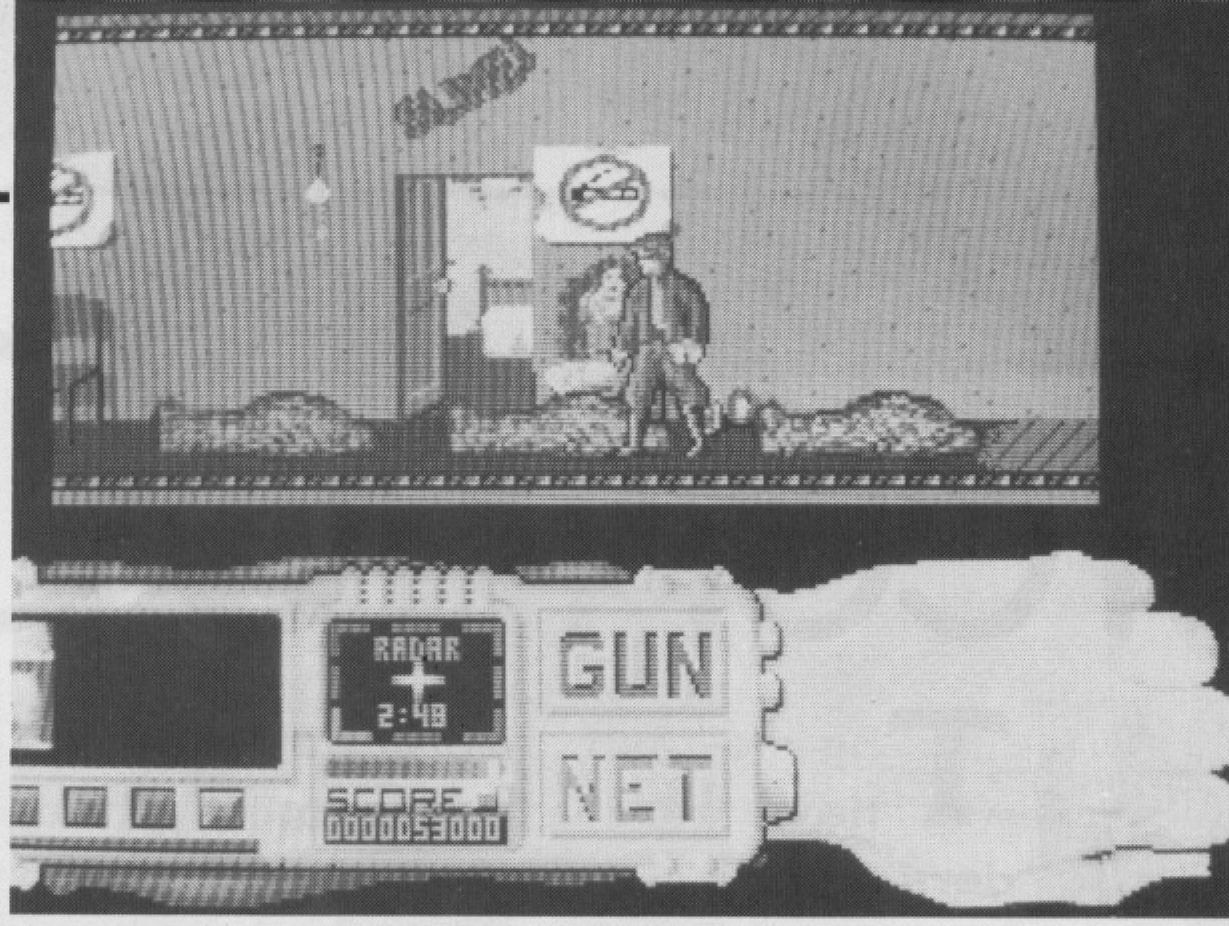


Uh oh. Ramming other cars and hitting scenery causes damage to your car. The little bar in the corner marked '% Operative' should be closely monitored as it's the only indication you've got as to how well you're doing in this section.



The destination's been reached and it's time for the second stage. Similar to *Rolling Thunder* but much more violent, the object is to set off on foot after the bad guy. The small square on the armband at the bottom of the screen contains two items of importance: the clock is a measure of how much time you have left, while the edge of the square is a radar.

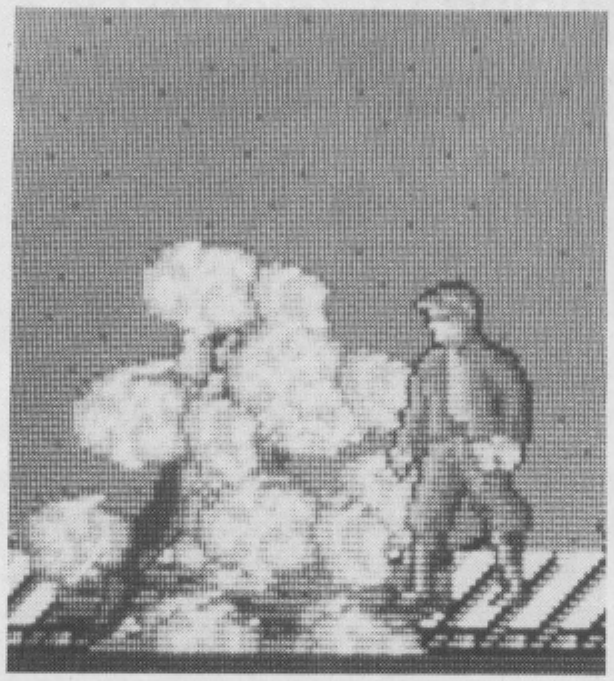


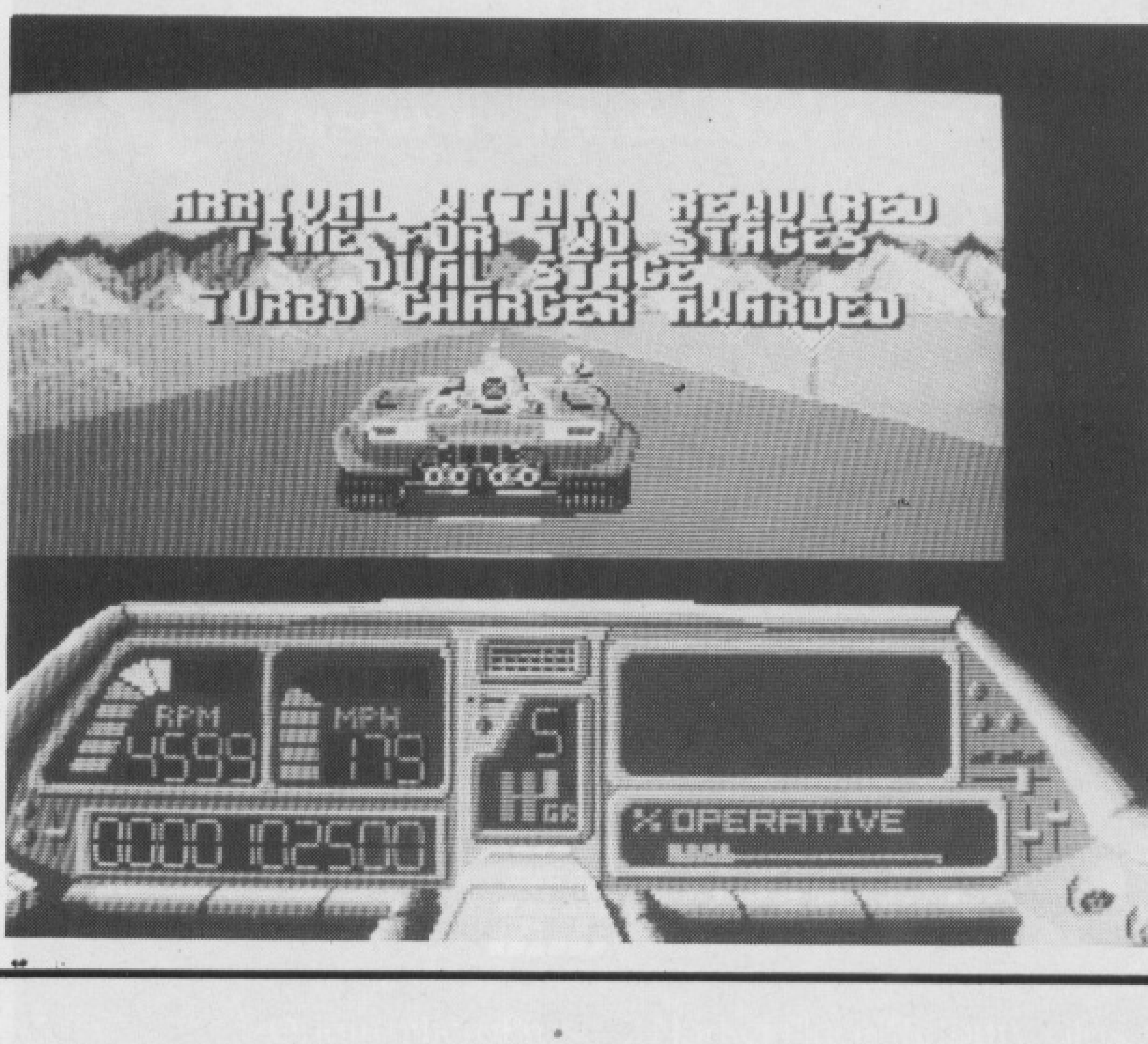


Ugh! Scratch one nasty. The mess of blood and sinew lying twitching at the bottom of the screen was a bad guy, until you blew him away. If this carnage is not to your taste, you could always use your next gun, which fires a lump of sticky mucus leaving the assailant wriggling in a cocoon on the floor.



The aim of the game is to achieve top rank. As you move up the hieracheal ladder, you also pick up a range of gadgets for your car, including turbo boosters and fluffy dice. Promotion is earned by completing missions, but you can screw up by either not doing the job within the time limit, letting the bad guy escape or by disposing of him improperly (ie killing him when you ain't supposed to.





ST

Technocop is fun, and even contains a hint of originality – combining two tried and tested game styles and reproducing both more than adequately. However (yes, there has to be one), although the driving section is smooth, it has no 'feel' whatsoever. It's far too easy to overcompensate against ramming – and indeed, too easy to get rammed off the road. The second section is fine in almost every detail. It looks good, especially the backgrounds, but the animation and scrolling is a little jerky. The sound however is pretty basic, with just a few grunts and groans here and there, and a fairly dull engine noise on the driving section. It's fun, but I'd hesitate to guess as to how long this game will last.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	73%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	57%

OVERALL 71%

A

There is no notable difference between this and the Amiga version, with the two being almost exactly the same in all respects including graphics, sound, feel, price and release date.

PC

Although there are plans for an IBM compatible bizzie, work has only just begun and there is no news as yet as to which graphics cards it will support.

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TIPS

DRAGON'S LAIR

Readysoft/Entertainment International

The only taxing thing about playing this conversion is using trial and error to find the correct sequence of moves. So, out of the kindness of our hearts, here's the complete 'solution'. One other thing... It's best to use the keyboard as there are no confusing diagonals to worry about.

DISK ONE

THE BRIDGE

Press FIRE as soon as the monster in the moat flexes its tendrils in Dirk's general direction. When Dirk swings move FORWARD to make him climb up through the hole and out of danger.

DRINK ME

Don't! Move RIGHT to kick down the door and leave the room. Scene One will now be repeated in reverse, so repeat the aforementioned moves.

DISK TWO

THE BATS

Move LEFT or RIGHT as soon as Dirk struts into view to leap the crevasses. There are three to negotiate.

THE ARMOURY

Press FIRE when Dirk strolls into the room. Move FORWARD as he draws his sword. Move RIGHT or LEFT towards the door when Dirk jumps into the screen.

IMMEDIATELY move DOWN when Dirk leaps to the door. DON'T take the stairs. Move RIGHT or LEFT to jump onto the table in the centre of the room – BEFORE Dirk walks up the stairs.

Move FORWARD to exit through the door at the back of the room.

DISK THREE

YE OLDE WHIRLPOOLS

As soon as Dirk appears on screen, move RIGHT or LEFT around the spaces next to the whirlpools. there are four whirlpools, alternating left and right.

THE RAPIDS

Move RIGHT or LEFT towards the light blue water as soon as Dirk appears on screen. Move FORWARD as soon as Dirk touches the light blue flow. Move FORWARD again when Dirk appears on the next expanse of water. Repeat for the next three rapids.

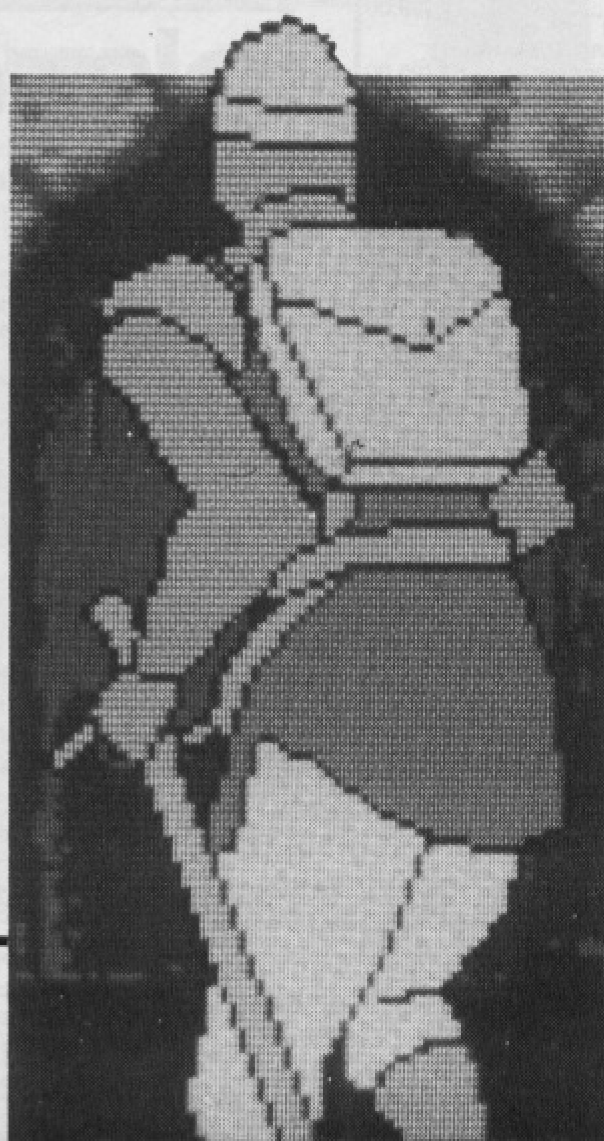
ANOTHER ROOM

Tap the FIRE BUTTON like crazy to cut the green gook to ribbons.

DISK FOUR

THE DEADLY CHEQUERBOARD

As soon as this scene appears on screen, note in which hand the knight is holding his sword. Now follow the respective route detailed below. Note: perform the next move AS SOON AS Dirk performs the last. When you reach the knight, continually tap the FIRE BUTTON to draw your sword and give the knight what for.



Sword in LEFT Hand: RIGHT, LEFT, FORWARD, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT.

Sword In RIGHT Hand: LEFT, RIGHT, FORWARD, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT.

ROLLERBALL

To avoid the six balls, move DOWN when Dirk turns his head to look both ways before crossing.

DISK FIVE

MAX SUPERHOD

Don't brick yourself. Keep tapping FORWARD to dive through the gap at the last possible moment. Done that? Now do it again, with the graphics reversed.

HI, SINGE

This scene is only played once – but you won't know which way around it's played until it appears. So... Move RIGHT or LEFT TOWARDS the teetering valuables to catch them. Move RIGHT or LEFT to jump AWAY from the valuables. Move DOWN to jump out of the screen. Move DOWN to catch the teetering valuables. Tap FIRE like crazy to 'Use The Magic Sword'.

DISK SIX

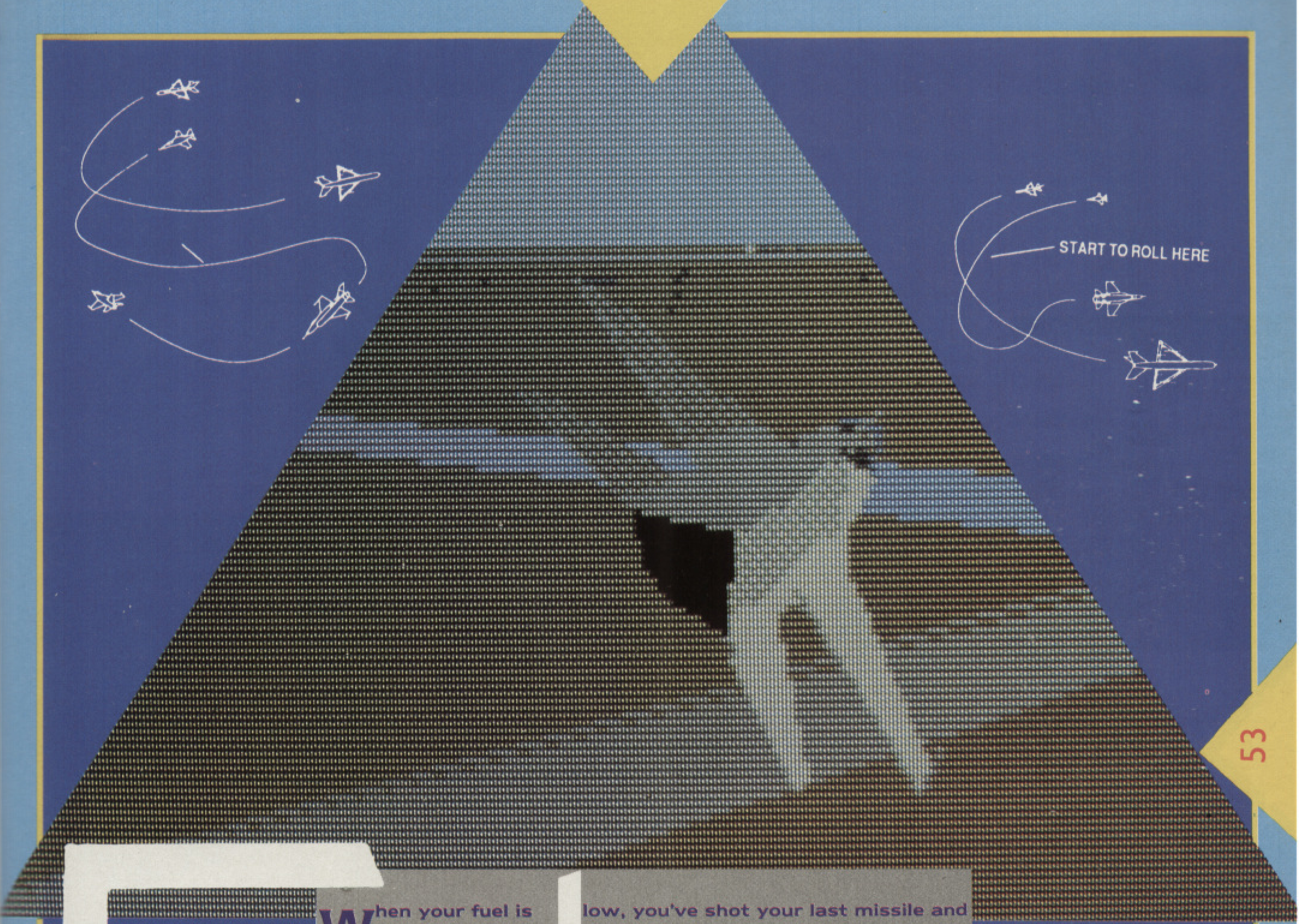
SINGE'S BACK

(And front for that matter...). This scene is only played once, but again – you won't know which way round the graphics are displayed until you see them. The direction in which the pillar is facing is important.

Move DOWN to avoid Singe's crushing claws. Move LEFT or RIGHT towards the most 'open' side of the pillar. Move DOWN to avoid Singe's tail. Move DOWN to avoid Singe's tail. Move DOWN to avoid Singe's tail. IMMEDIATELY press FIRE to throw the sword and kill Singe. Daphne is now yours for the taking.

THE SNOG

Move LEFT, RIGHT, UP and DOWN to wiggle Dirk's tongue.



When your fuel is low, you've shot your last missile and there's bogeys all over you, who you gonna call? Who else but resident flight instructor Brian Nesbitt.

Falcon



Getting to grips with the F-16 is something that can't be achieved instantly, and can only be achieved by making use of the First Lieutenant (practice) rank which allows you to fly problem-free.

This guide is designed to take the novice pilot through a selection of typical missions and encounters, as well as providing a handy list which should help put a stop to any silly mistakes.

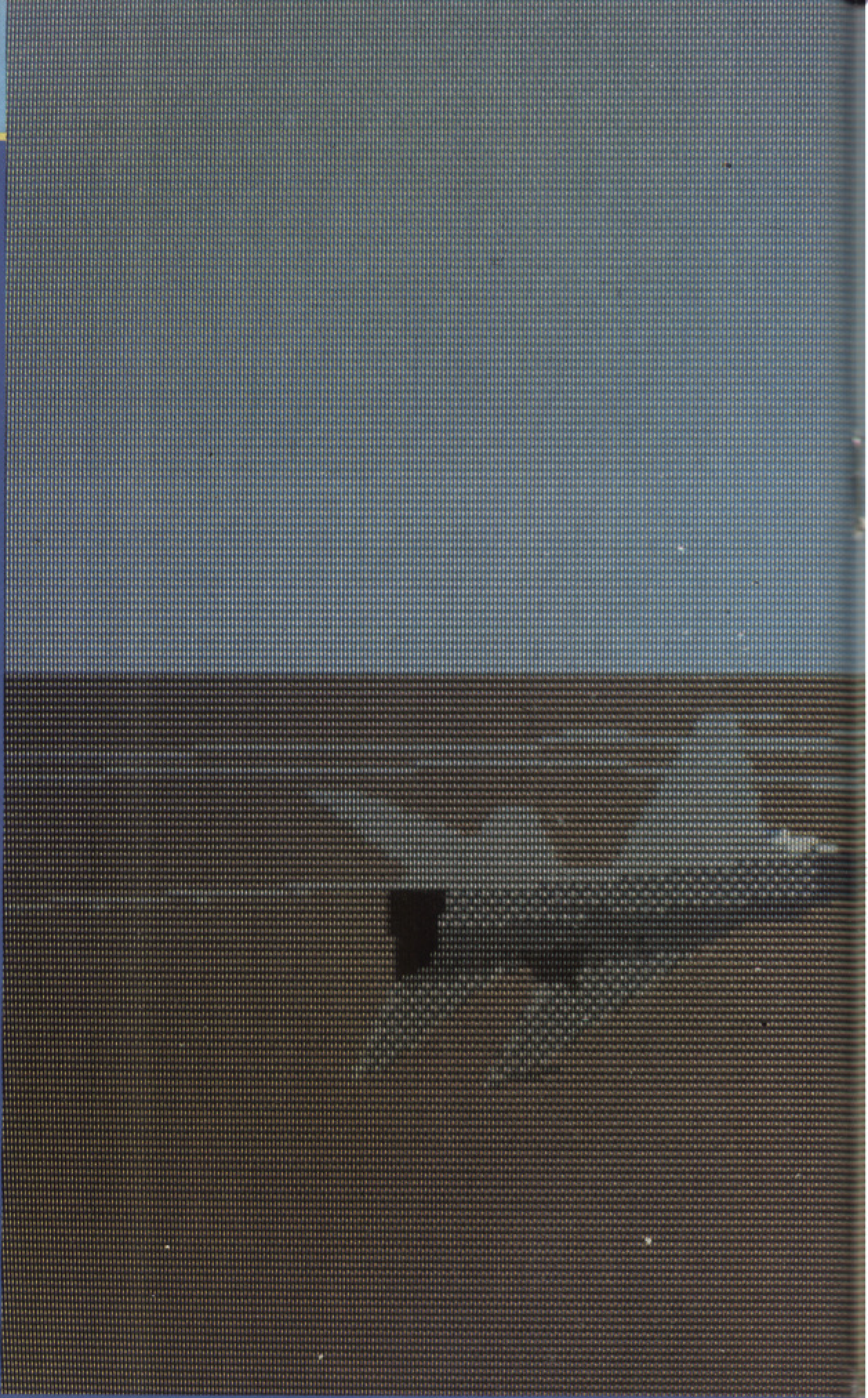
If the controls feel too responsive (or not responsive enough), remember keys F3 and F4 provide a sensitivy adjustment facility. Experiment with the settings until you find one that's right for you.

There are only four missions covered here, as these are the best





examples of the simulation's four different mission types.



ARMAMENT SELECTION



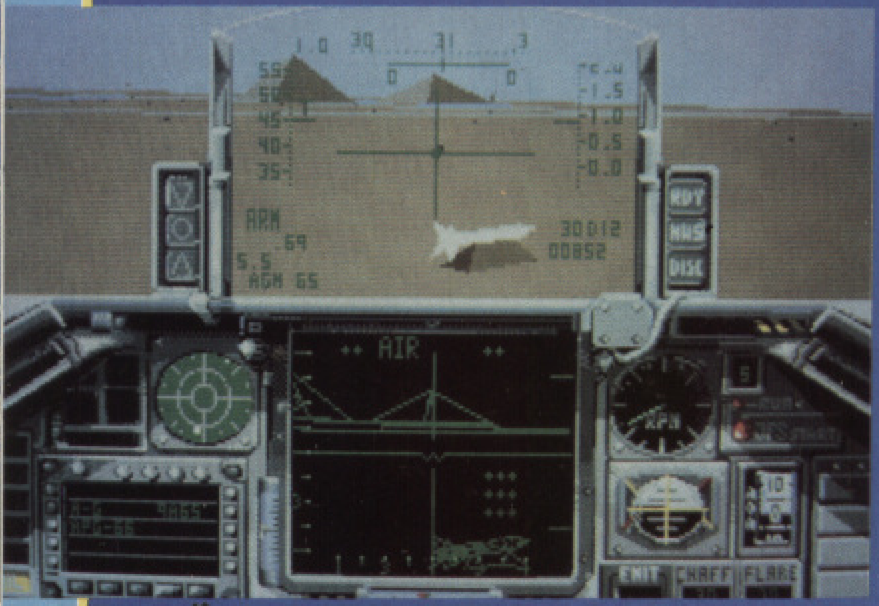
Although the armament you've selected may be in short supply (or even completely out of stock) – don't panic, as a weapon's availability isn't determined completely at random. The only weapons that are likely to be in short supply are those that you don't really need.

MISSION ONE
RATTLESNAKE ROUNDUP

Essentially a combat version of the Milk Run training mission (where three unguarded buildings are presented as targets), this standard air-to-ground strike represents a relatively simple way to earn merit points – as long as you stick to some simple guidelines. Because the area is riddled with SAMs stay below 2,000 feet at all times, with both the ECM pod and afterburners switched off to lessen the risk of detection.

Secondly, NEVER make more than one pass over a SAM-infested area as this inevitably results in detection. Try to knock out all three of your chosen SAM sites on the first pass. If you can't manage this, abort the mission and head back to base.

To use cannonfire against SAMs, approach low and fast keeping the cursor vertically in line with the oncoming SAM site and your finger on the firebutton.



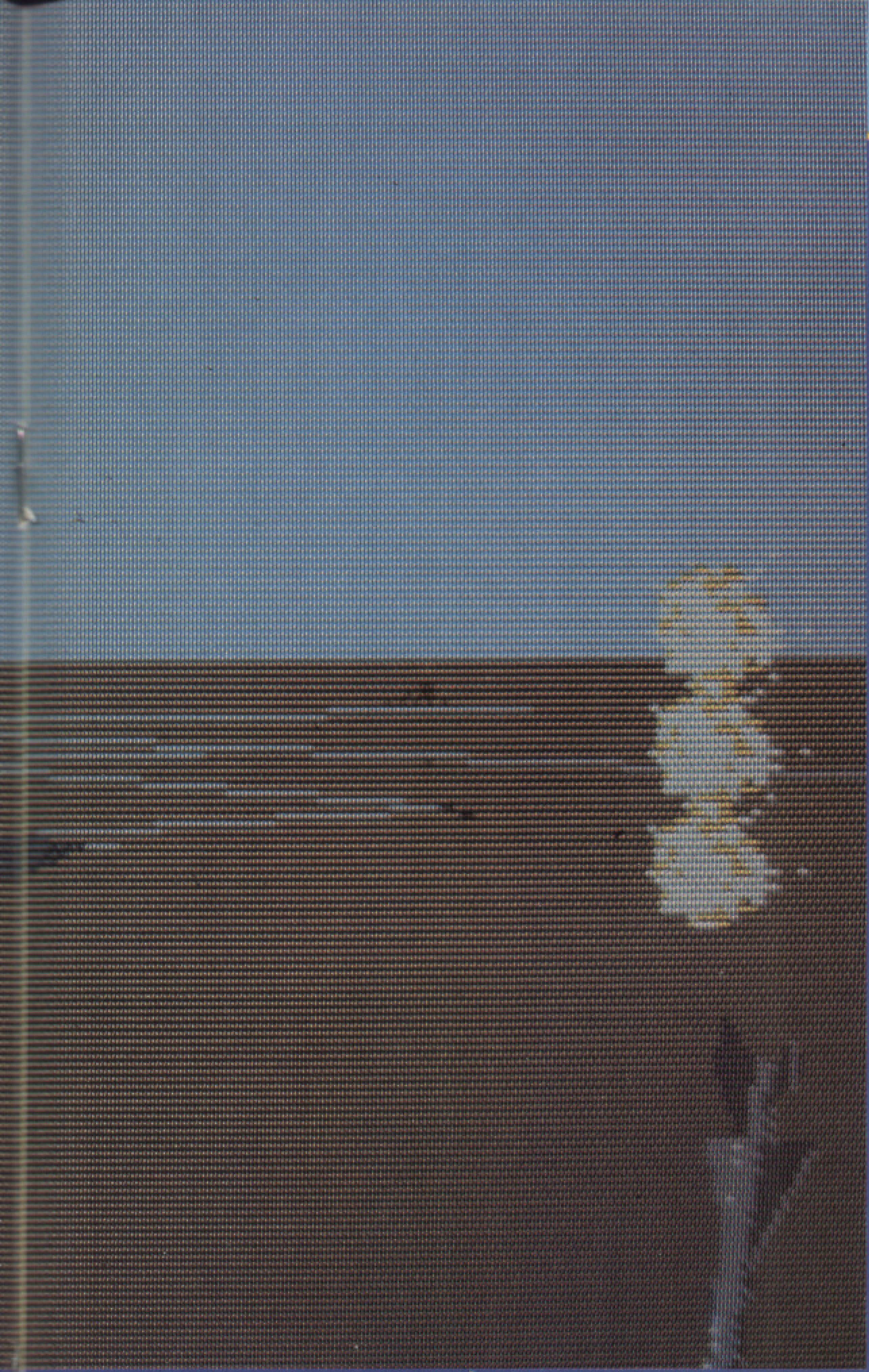
Maverick missiles or Cannonfire are the most suitable weapons to use against SAMs, as using the Mk 84 requires the mastering of Continuously Computed Impact Point (CCIP) bombing.



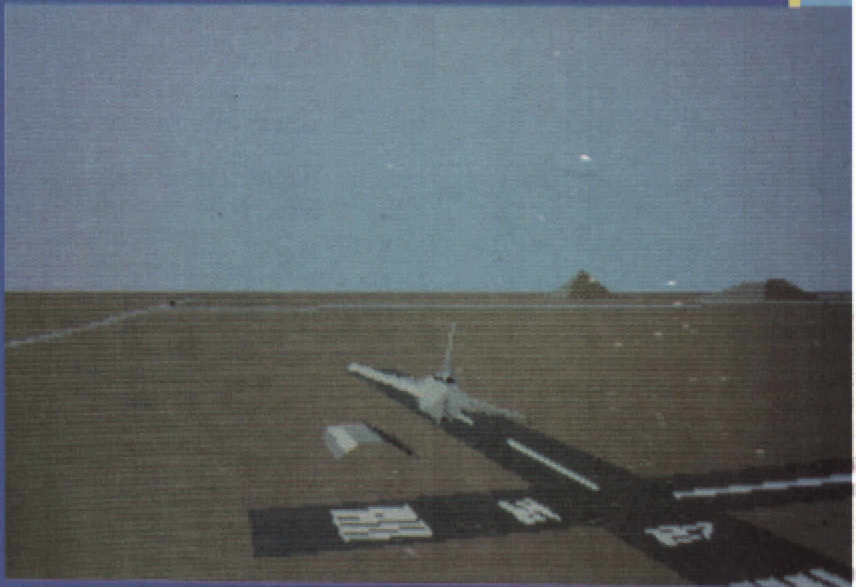
MISSION TWO
DRAGON'S TAIL, DRAGON'S JAW AND DOUBLE DRAGON (A-G bombing)

Destroying the Suspension Bridge in Dragon's Tail is a lot easier than knocking out Dragon's Jaw's Cantilever Bridge. The reason is that the suspension bridge is susceptible to Maverick missiles, while the Cantilever can only be destroyed with a Mk 84 bomb.





MISSION THREE HORNET'S NEST



Hornet's Nest once again requires CCIP bombing, this time to drop a Durandal bomb on the enemy's runway. An extra fuel tank is a necessity here, as the runway is in the furthest corner of the map. Failing to take the extra fuel and subsequently getting caught up in a dogfight (or using the afterburners) rules out any chances of you ever making it home.

When approaching the enemy runway, switch off your COMED radar (its emissions can alert MiGs to your presence). If a MiG engages you, attempt to avoid or outrun it. DON'T attempt to fight back as you can't afford to waste any fuel.

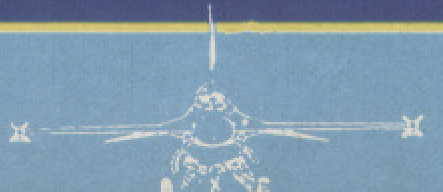


The runway is protected by three SAM sites, so drop to below 2,000 ft when you enter the quadrant and start your attack run here. Don't attempt to take out the SAMs, they're too close to the runway and you won't have time to change weapons modes and line up your bomb drop. Concentrate on aligning your CCIP cursors on the point where the two runways intersect. Once you've delivered the bomb, remember to fly back around the SAMs rather than back over them.

Locking on to your target is easy enough, but actually getting the bomb's impact point to meet up with the target box is another matter. A lot of preparation time is essential, so take a long, slow approach flying along the bridge rather than across it. Lock-on to the bridge as soon as you can see it properly, and you will have plenty of time to match up your targets. Mk 84s are VERY heavy and carrying one causes the plane's handling to suffer (especially in dogfighting), so there's zero margin for error.







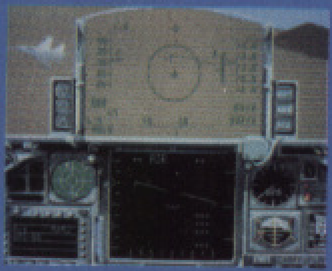
MISSION FOUR



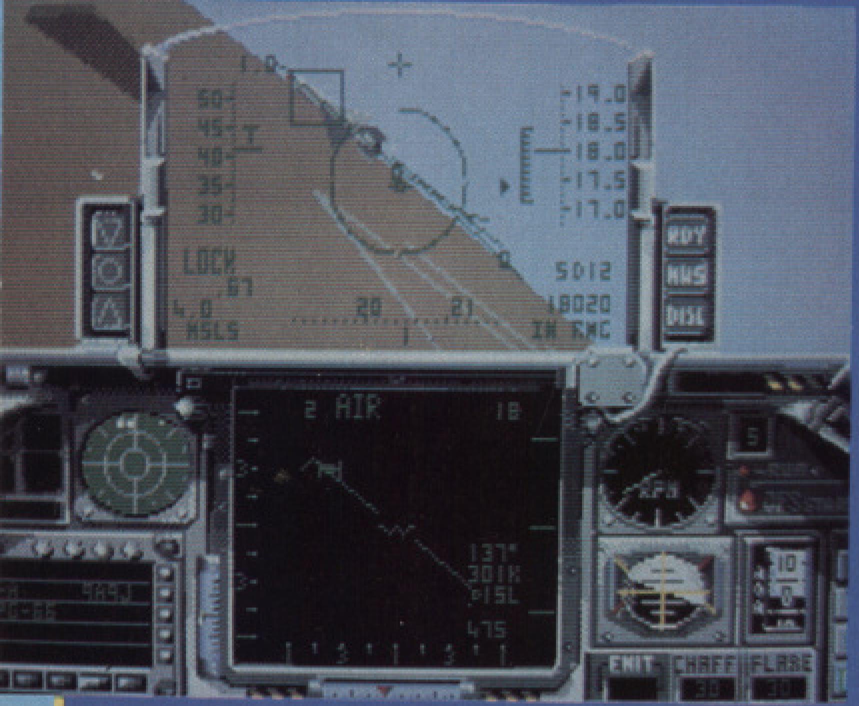
Watch out for the Break X, a large cross that appears on the HUD to indicate that you're too close to the MiG to launch a missile. If this happens, either break off and re-engage or switch quickly to cannonfire.

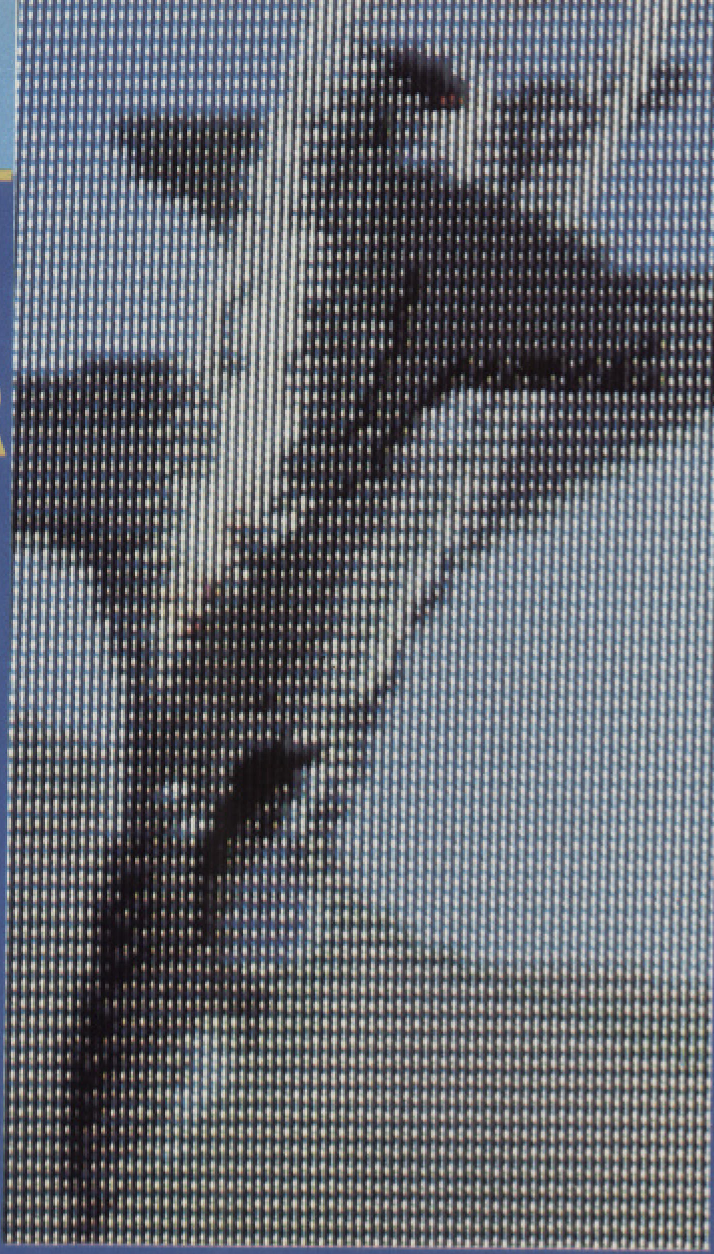
BLACK BANDIT (Air-To-Air Combat)

Black Bandit is the Air-To-Air equivalent of Milk Run – the simplest mission of its type. Stock up with 9Ls if they're available (they're much more effective) and engage the MiG at high altitude (which leaves you free to perform loops without having to worry about hitting the ground).



Don't let the MiG draw you too far out from base and remember that it's practically impossible to knock out a MiG on the first pass, as it will almost always be flying straight towards you, and you need to see its tail to get a good missile lock.





STAYING ALIVE

A wise old pilot once said: "Flying an F-16 ain't like dusting crops, boy!" Bear this in mind! Make a mistake on any of the missions and at best you just lose your wings – so here are a few handy guidelines that should increase your chances of survival.

● When attempting to evade incoming enemy fire, it's important to remember one simple rule: Chaff is only effective against SAM missiles, while Flares are designed for use against MiG air to air missiles – make sure that you're using the right tools for the job.

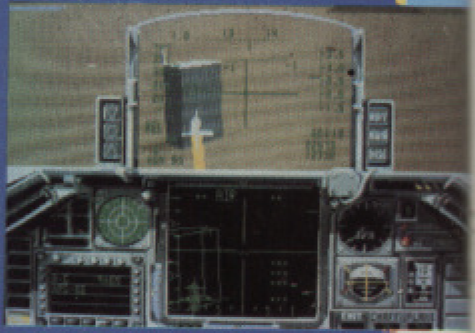
● To achieve a successful landing, you MUST set down on Runway 9 (displayed horizontally on the map). A landing on the other runway won't be recognised.

● Make a rule of staying below 200 ft over SAM territory, even if you can't see one in the vicinity on your map. The SAM 7 is launched by foot-soldiers and therefore isn't displayed on the HUD. But they're every bit as deadly.

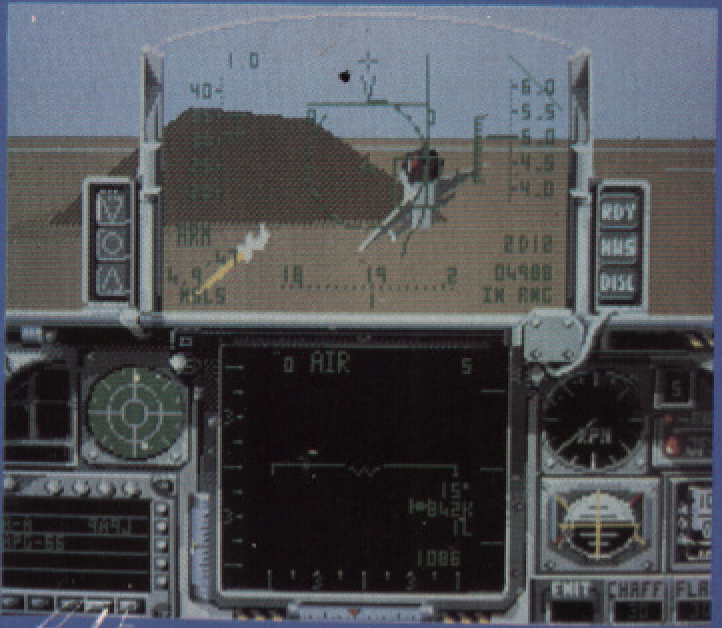
● Always make a quick visual check for MiGs by cycling through the various cockpit views every couple of minutes. It's possible for MiGs to slip through your radar undetected and sneak up on you without warning.

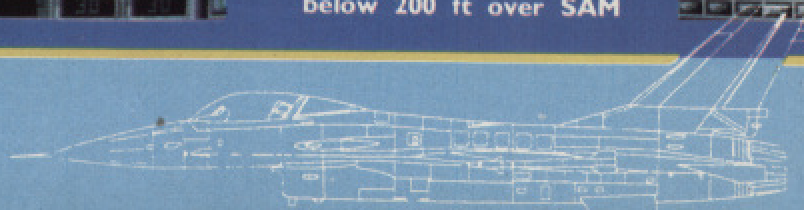
● Don't attempt to shoot MiGs down while flying above SAM sites, as the missiles will open fire as soon as their airspace is clear of their own aircraft. Try to lure the MiG over safe ground before entering into a dogfight.

● Once a Maverick missile is locked onto a target, that lock remains until it's cleared by using the X key. Should a first shot miss therefore, the first lock must be cleared and a second targetting sequence initiated.



● Sidewinder missiles may be heat-seeking, but it's not enough to just lock one onto a targetted MiG. The target must also be flying away from your nose-cone so that the missile can track the heat from the plane's exhaust. If the MiG is either side-on or flying directly towards you, your shot still stands a good chance of missing.





AFTERBURNER

Activision

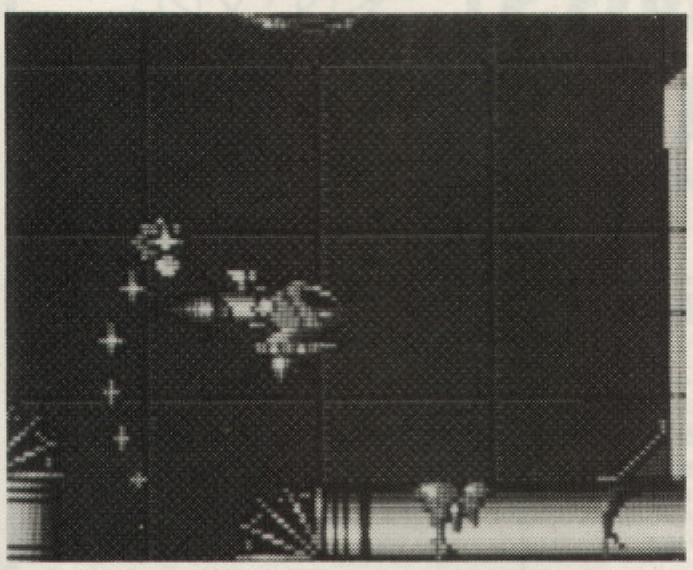
Pause the game with backspace and type in THUNDERBLADE to activate the new improved cheat mode (tit-for-tat really, considering Thunderblade's original cheat code was AFTERBURNER!) Now you should find that:

G – gives extra missiles.
T – depletes your missile supply (very useful!)
‹ – jumps to the next stage.
› – returns to the previous stage.
N – gives extra lives.

CYBERNOID

Hewson

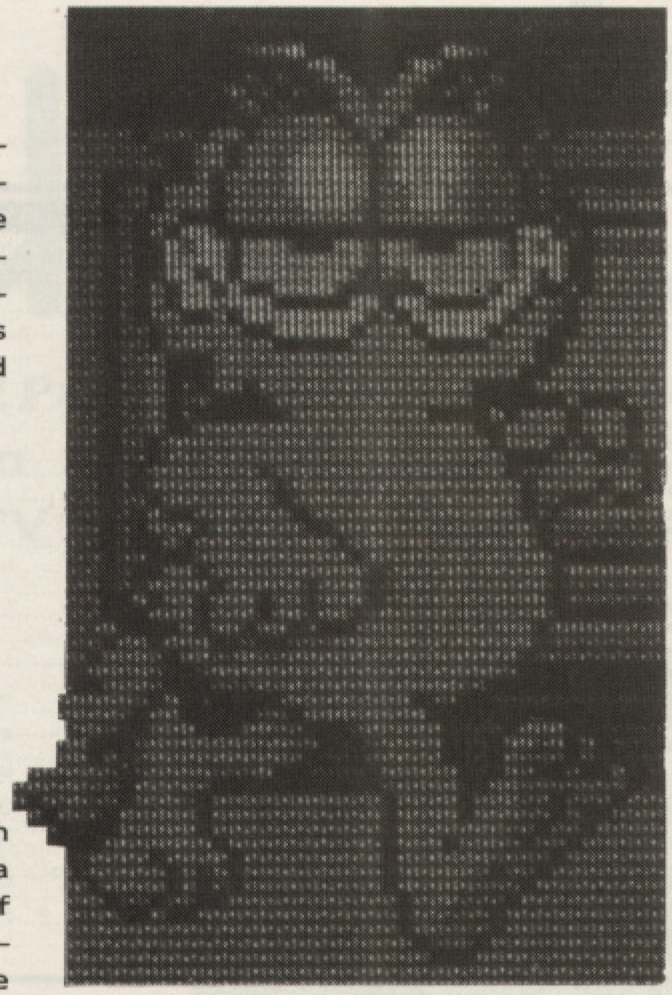
Type in RAISTLIN while on the title screen to enjoy a slightly easier version of Raphael Cecco's shoot 'em up – thanks to the addition of infinite lives.



DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Mirrorsoft

It's golden oldie time once again. While the game is booting from the second disk hold down the K key. Once the game has loaded select Build Army, whereupon you should find staggering 1,024 knights in your home army. Now select Seek Conquest and you'll find you've also got 1,024 knights in your campaign army. Thanks to Henkuang Houng, among many others, for that one.



GARFIELD

The Edge

How do you rescue your beloved Arlene from the clutches of the city animal pound? You're about to find out thanks to Kevin Ponder of Hitchin in Hertfordshire.

The first thing to do is pick up the torch, making sure that the picture of Odie stays in the second inventory picture frame. Now go to the park and run into a gap between a tree and the golf course. You'll see a busty young woman sitting on a bench. Making sure you've got the torch in frame one, walk into the bushes and you'll fall through a hole into the sewers. Now go left, down, down, down, left and you will see Nermal. Keeping the torch in frame two, give him a kick and keep on kicking him until a mouse appears. Get the mouse in frame two, (Odie's frame) keeping the torch in frame one. Now go right, up, up, up and right. Drop the torch, go to the Health shop and drop the mouse, causing a doughnut to appear. Pick it up, go to the shop in the back yard and fall down the hole, where you'll find the large rat. Drop the doughnut and the rat will stop to eat it. Kick the chest, pick up the hidden key and climb back up the ladder. Leave the shed and make sure the key is in Odie's frame. Get the bucket and take it to the hardware store. Use it and a dollar bill will appear in place of the bucket. Now go to the health shop and use the bucket, causing a packet of birdseed to appear. Return to the park scene where the woman is sitting on the bench, drop the seed and leave. Pick up the key, re-enter the screen and wait until the flying bird picks you up. When you're dropped, go in the only direction available and you'll find Arlene and complete the game!

GENERAL TIPS:

If you don't want Odie to drain your pizza power, pick up the aniseed balls, rendering you impervious to his power-reducing antics.

To open the catflap in the back door, pick up the spade, find the red bone and drop the spade by the red door. Pick up the bone and drop it by the door, opening it.

For a points bonus, drop the golf ball in the area shaded by the tree in the park and kick it, which will result in either a hole in one (loadsapoints) or it'll fall into the sewer, depending on how well-placed your kick was.

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Ocean

Daley would be well chuffed if he knew that by typing in HINGSEN.J you could activate the cheat mode and then select any event you fancy with the function keys.

TIPS

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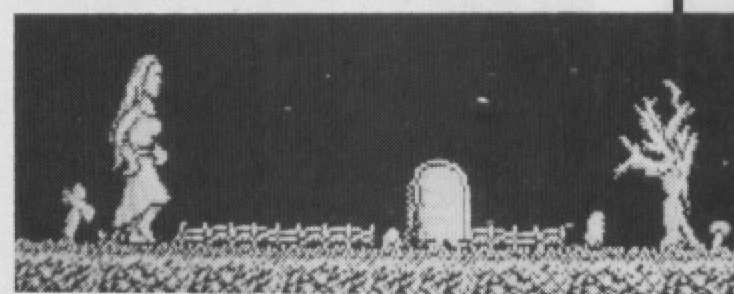
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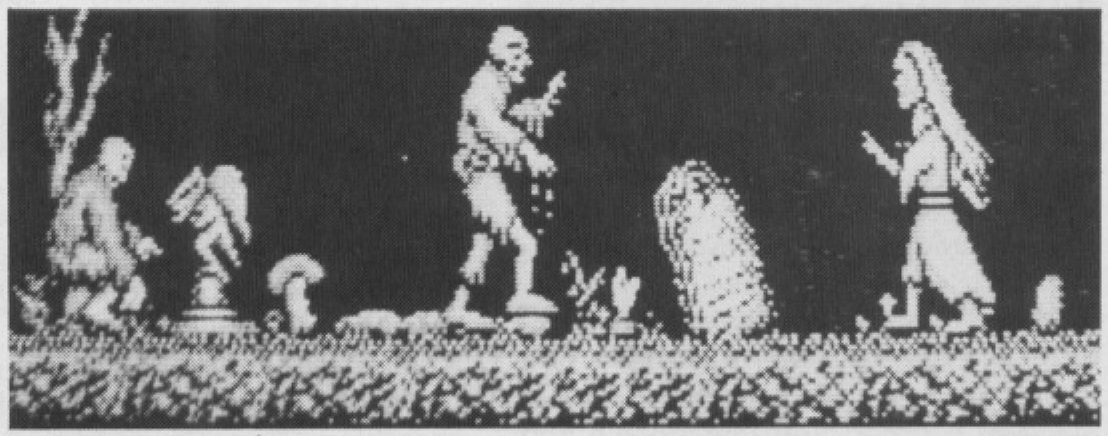
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CASTLE COMPUTERS
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Munsters

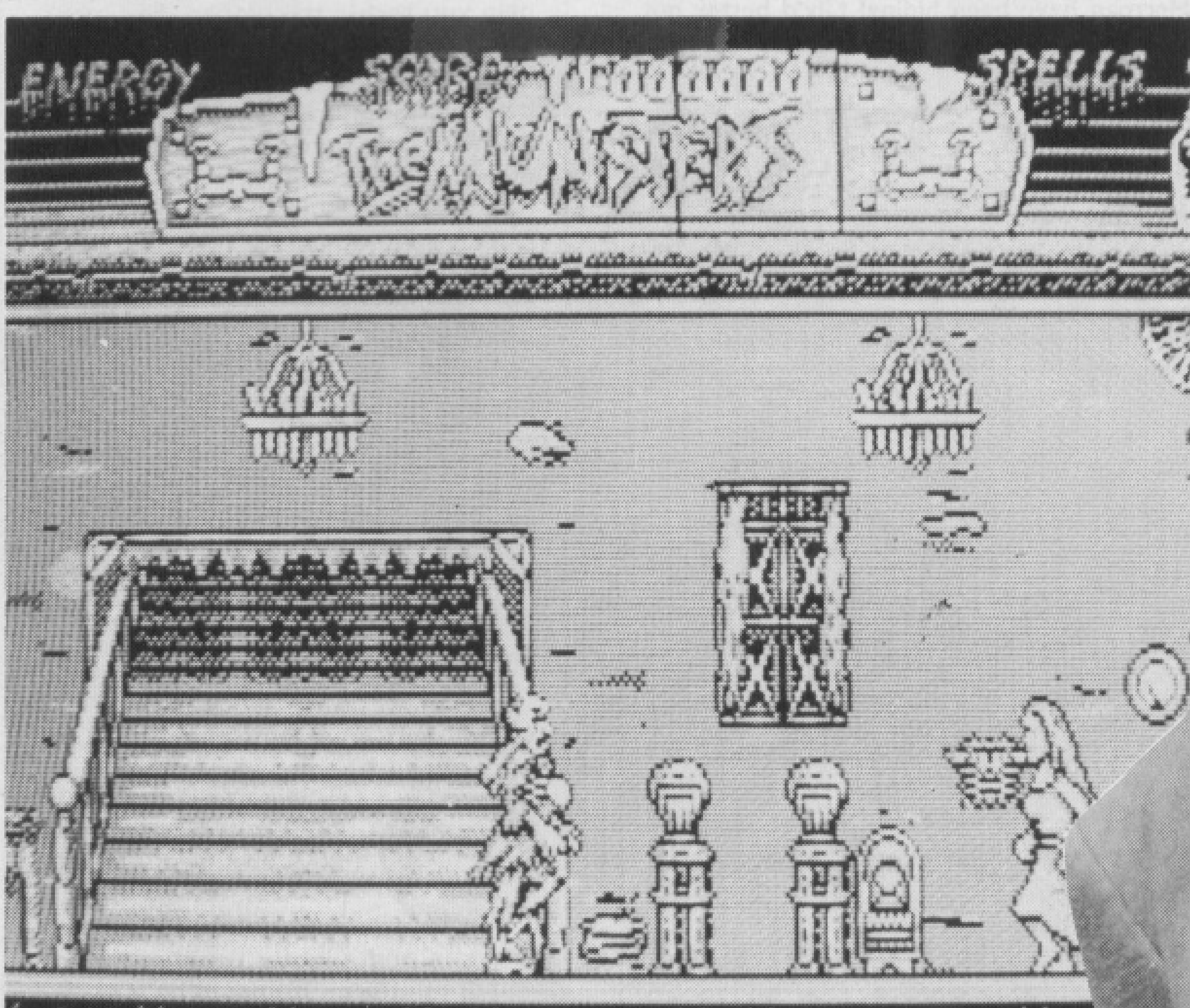
Monster mash expert Paul Boughton puts the frighteners on Again Again's first release based on the hit TV show. Will it be a graveyard smash?





The current Channel 4 reruns of **The Munsters** have inspired new software house Again Again to bring out a game based on the characters. It may have seemed like a good idea at the time... but it wasn't.

Lily Munster busily explores the bottom floor of 1313 Mockingbird Avenue – but careful Lily . . . even the slightest contact with that approaching ghoul will probably finish you off.







Back in the early 1960s, American television chiefs decided that monsters, vampires, werewolves, witches and ghosts were suitable subject matter for prime-time family entertainment. But the shows they produced were not nail-biting-hiding-behind-the-sofa excursions into terror. No, they made comedy shows.

And so came: The Munsters, which originally ran in America between 1964 and 1966 and featured an outrageous rip off of Frankenstein's monster in the shape of Herman Munster; Betwitched, which started its run in 1964, and centred on a rather attractive witch who married an ordinary mortal; My Mother The Car, again 1964, about a haunted car; and finally The Addams Family (1964-1966), based on a black-humour cartoon strip by Charles Addams. All these shows were extremely popular, and in the case of The Munsters, a spin-off feature film was made in 1966.

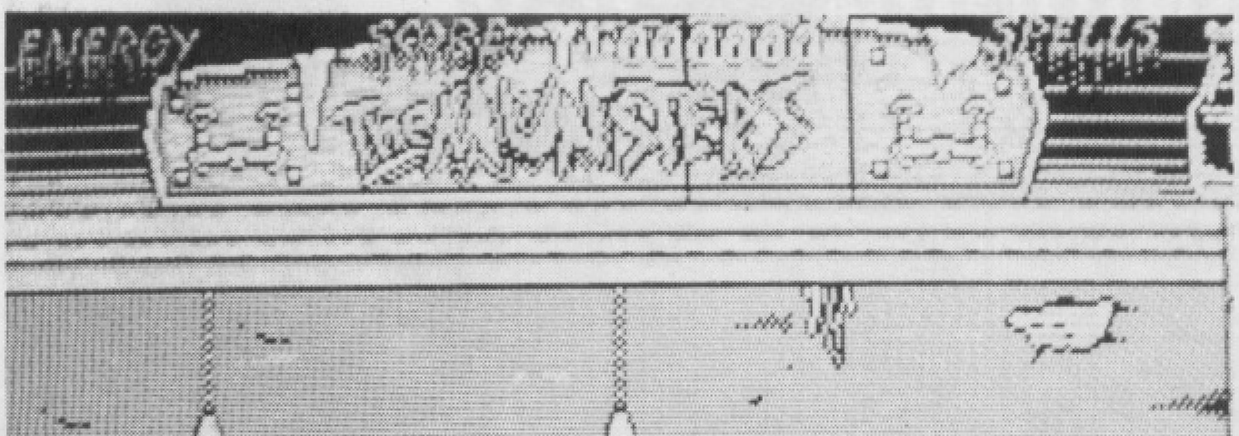
Like all good monsters these shows refuse to lay down and die. British television constantly recycles these shows every few years – with the possible exception of the distinctly odd-sounding My Mother The Car. If you haven't seen them, don't worry. They're bound to be screen again within a few years.

The similarities between The Munsters and The Addams Family are astounding. Both feature a family of horror movie cliches living normal, non-violent lives in normal American society. The comedy comes from the fact that they think everybody else is odd. The humour is gentle, sometimes witty – especially in the case of The Addams Family – and stands the test of time remarkably well.

Herman Munster, the gentle Frankenstein clone, complete with neck-bolts and head gash; his wife Lily, a vampire; Grandpa, Lily's father and a blood-sucker of advanced years; Herman and Lily's child Eddie, part vampire, part monster, all-round freak and in pain in the neck. And then there is Marilyn, Herman and Lily's niece and the only 'normal' family member.

The game sees Marilyn kidnapped by Old Nick in an attempt to persuade the peace and home-loving Munsters to return to a more ghoulish existence. Their home has been filled with things that go bump in the night to put the frighteners on them. To rescue her niece, Lily is forced to roam her house searching for spells and avoiding the spooks.

Ahh – so that's where Grandpa and Herman have been hiding! Lily'd better not expect to get any sense out of them however as these two static characters appear to be part of the wallpaper.



ST

With a plot as threadbare as Herman's suit, only some really good gameplay could rescue The Munsters from a fate worse than death. Unfortunately, what's on offer is really poor – and worse than that, it's really annoying. First Lily must build up her spell power by zapping the lesser ghosts. This becomes extremely tedious. You then set off to find the various objects which help you tackle the higher level monsters. Ever after collecting objects it was frustrating taking on the bigger beasts. Sometimes they only barely touched Lily to drain all her energy away. And with only one life per game, I was going back to the beginning with frustrating regularity. The price tag seems excessive for what's on offer... Mediocre graphics, an unoriginal plot and overly frustrating gameplay. RIP.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	63%
SOUND	40%
PLAYABILITY	36%
VALUE	25%

OVERALL 41%

A

This version should just be finished as you read this and is due out at £19.99. Apart from a few minor graphic differences and slightly enhanced music and spot effects, it should be a carbon copy of its ST counterpart.

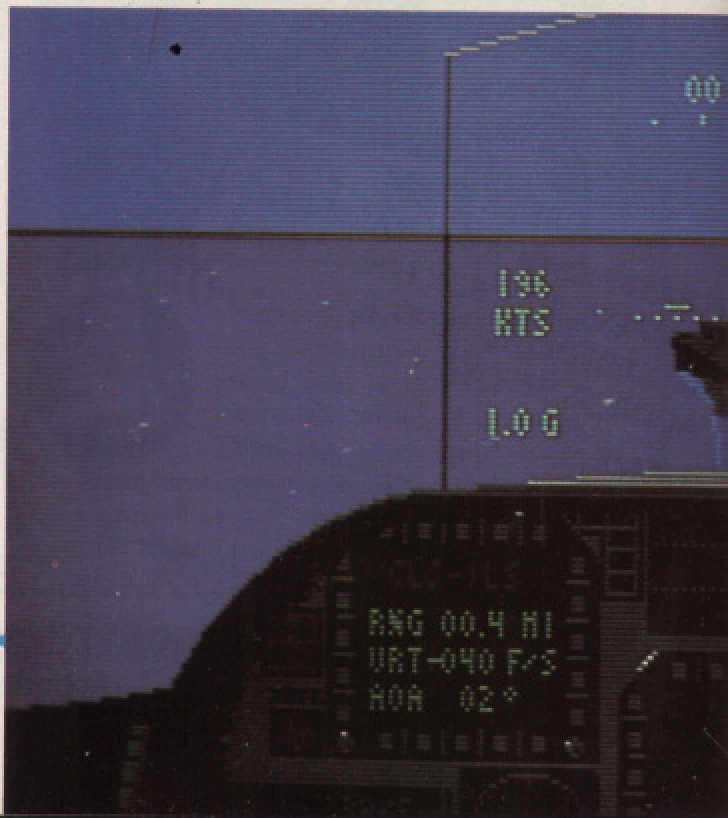
Jet Fight

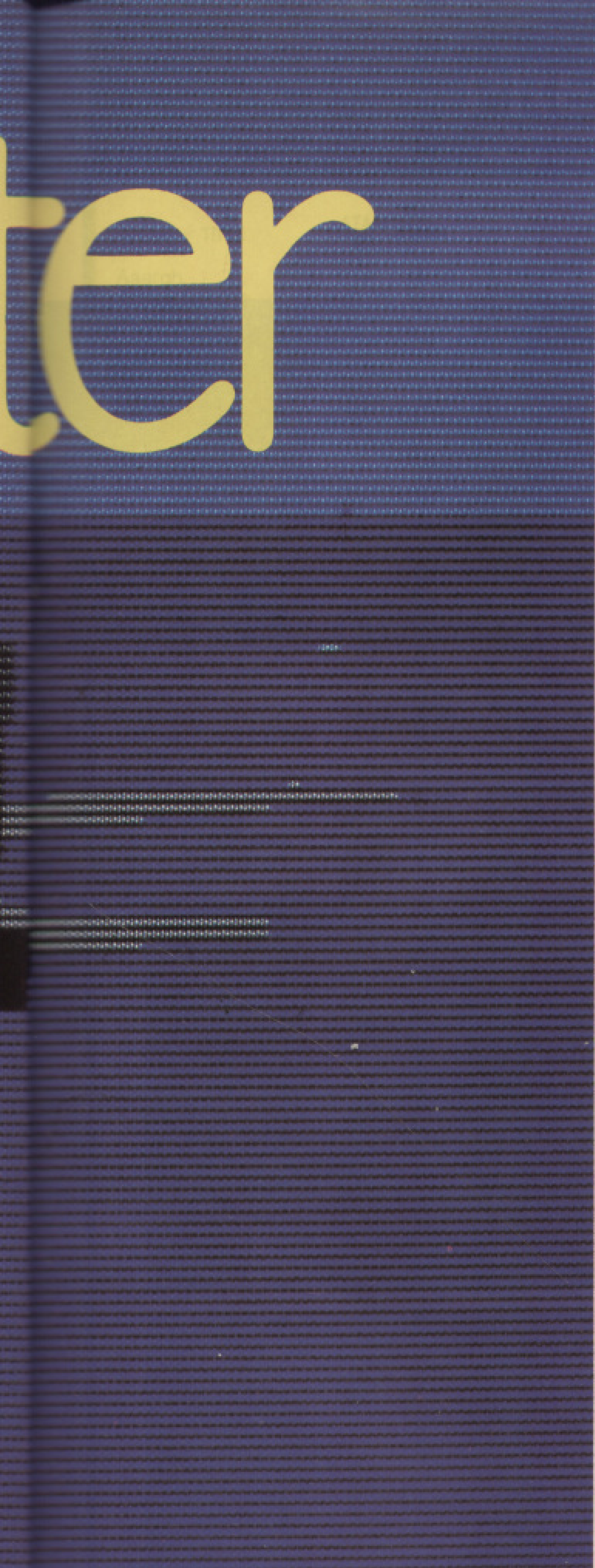




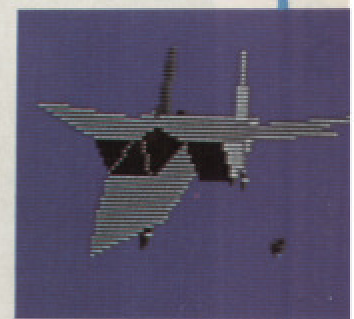
Before you can fly any of Jetfighter's missions, you need to earn your wings. Qualifying for a mission entails not one but FOUR successful landings on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Constellation. This time round the ILS (Instrument Landing System) as seen in Falcon and F-16 Combat Pilot has been included to aid landings at night and in poor visibility when it may be difficult to see the carrier.

Four training missions are provided to help get to grips with the bird. Flight Manoeuvres is a non-hostile scenario that takes you through useful combat moves such as the Immelman turn, Split-S, High-G Yo-Yo and so on. There's also an intercept and destroy mission, a dogfight with a MiG and a low-level bombing run to contend with.





Gary Whitta hits the hard deck with a PC-only flight simulation from American software house Velocity, and finds that creator Bob 'Interceptor' Dinnerman is no one-game wonder.

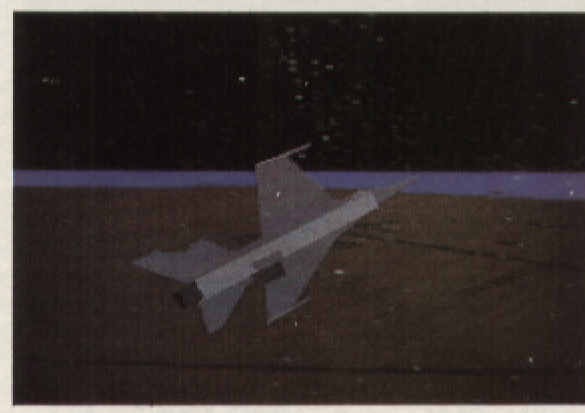


Electronic Arts' **F/A-18 Interceptor**, created by Bob Dinnerman, was widely regarded as one of the best 16-bit games of its time when it was released back in 1987. Unfortunately it was Amiga only, and even today there are no plans to convert it to other formats.

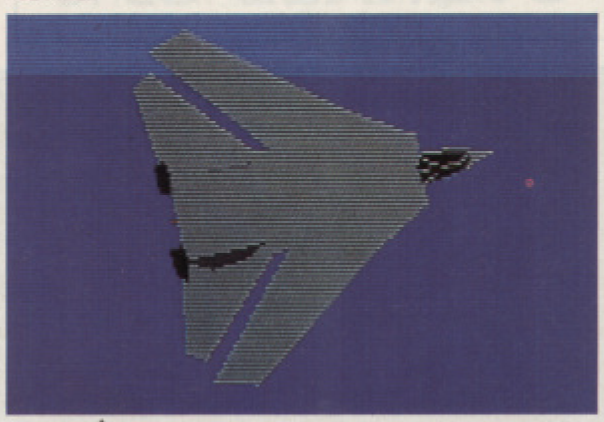
Disgruntled PC owners needn't feel left out any longer, as the unofficial sequel is already available, and this time it's a PC only product (due to its US origins) brought to these shores by Software Circus.

Basically what Mr Dinnerman has done is to take **Interceptor**, add the option to control any of three planes (the F-14 Tomcat, F-16 Falcon or F-18 Hornet), increase the number of missions to 32 and add a whole new range of weapons, tactics and gameplay features.

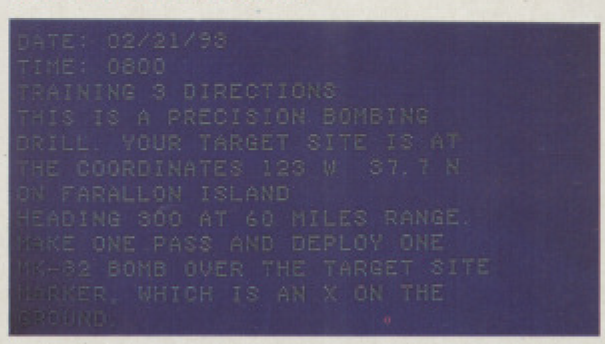


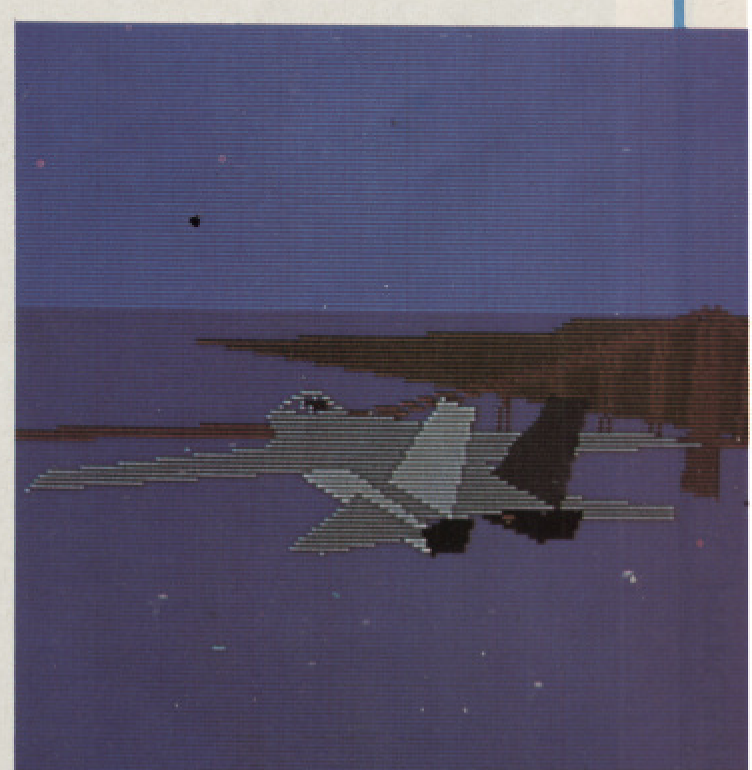


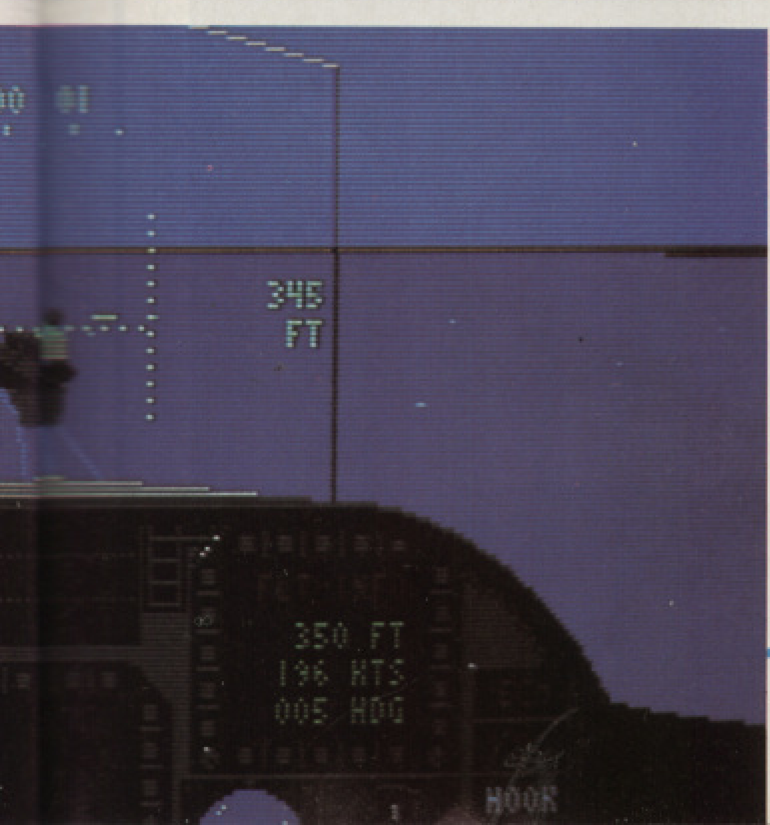
For a really impressive graphic touch, check out the plane's exterior views. Two pan facilities, vertical and horizontal, allow it to be viewed from every conceivable angle. And if you've got a fast PC, the speed and smoothness with which the camera angle moves is astounding.

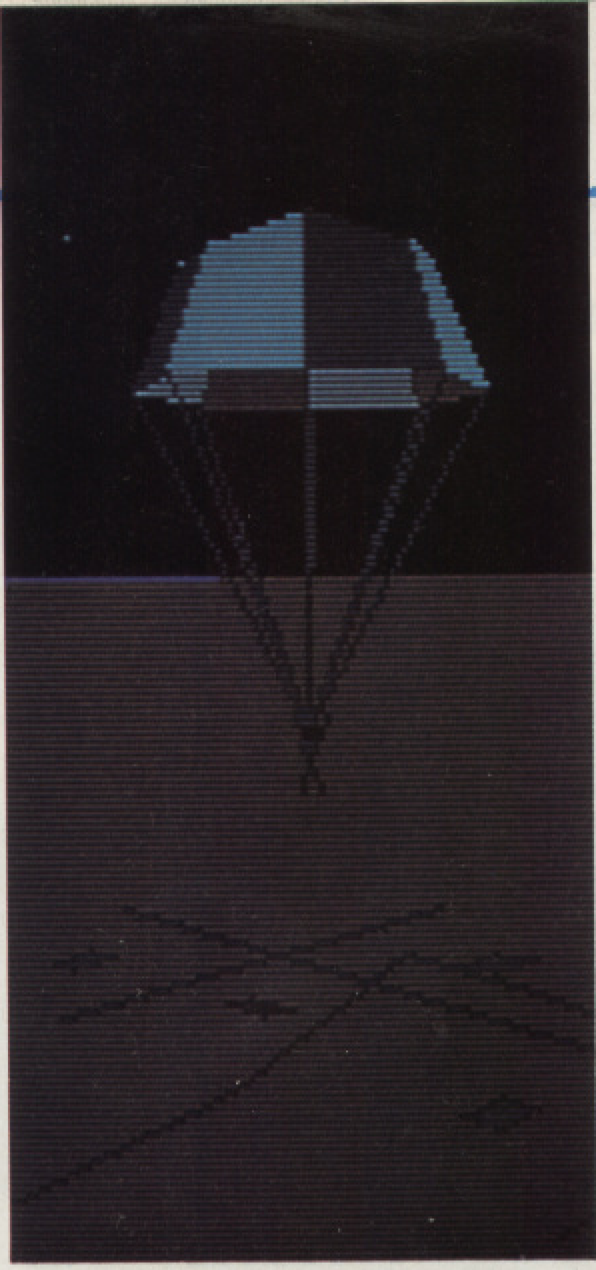


Although Jetfighter isn't strictly a simulation, the attention to details is excellent. For example, it's possible to manually alter the position of the F-14 wings (a feature exclusive to the 'twin geometry' Tomcat). Another cute touch is that ejecting from the F-14 produces two parachutes – both the pilot and his navigator.









Detailed information on the current weather conditions is given at the outset of each flight. Wind speed and direction and the level of visibility are given as well as the height of the hard deck (the imaginary barrier that you must not fly under). In Free Flight mode, the pilot also selects the time of his flight, thus choosing the level of visibility – depicted by different sky colours such as blue (clear), grey (overcast) and black (night).

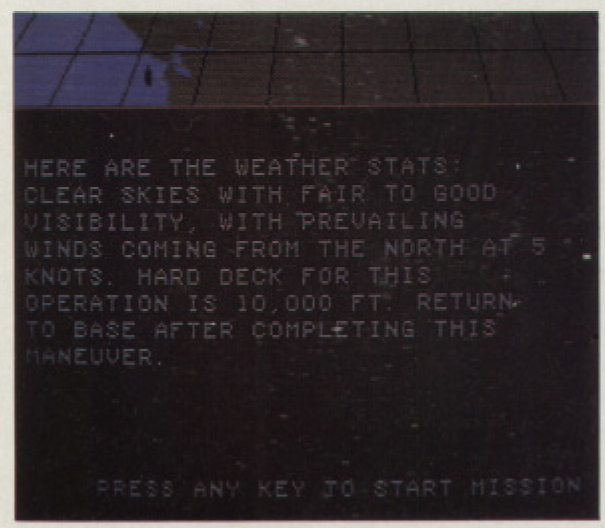
PC

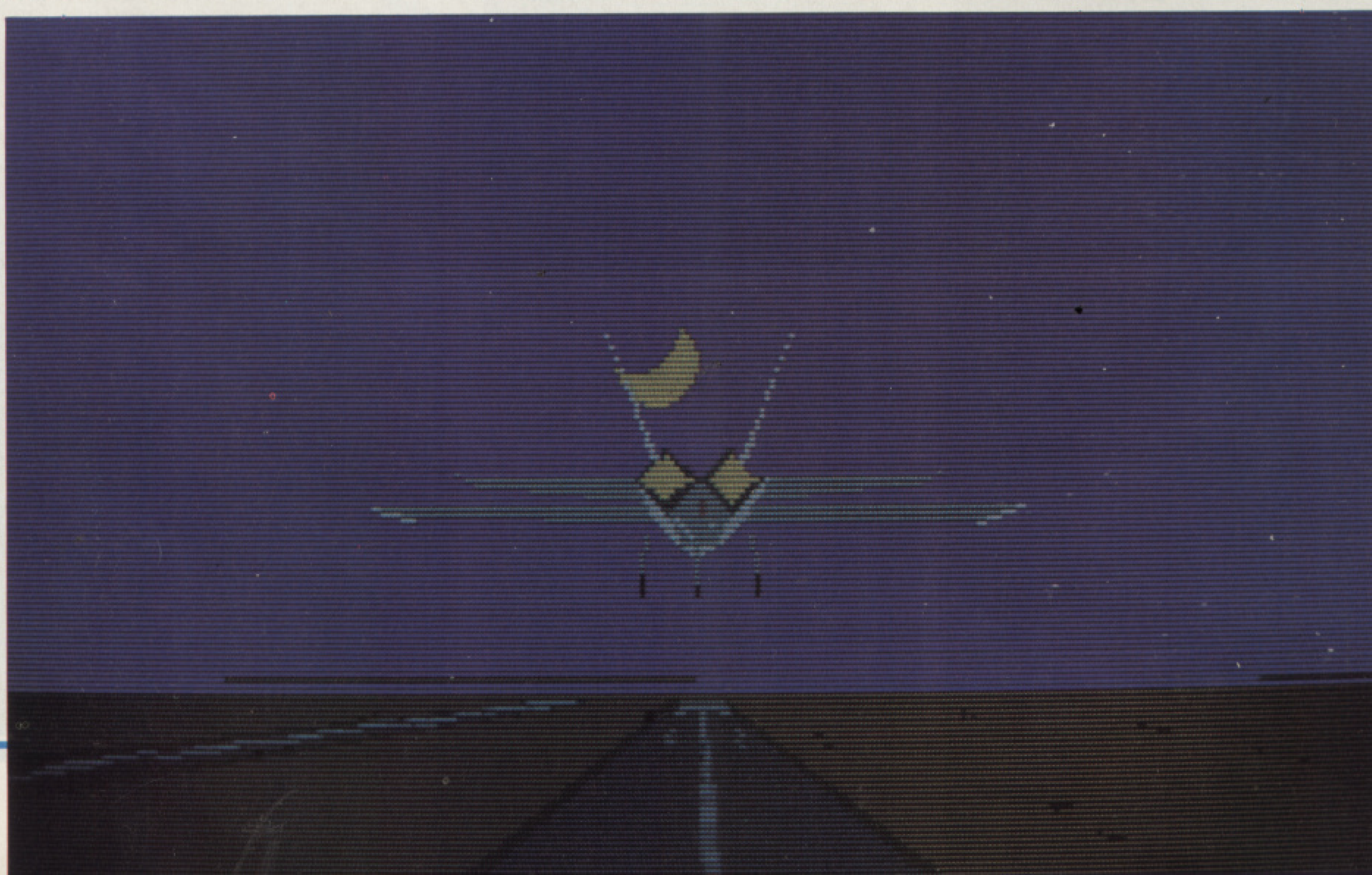
While F-19 is quite possibly the best bet for hardened simulation addicts and purists, Jetfighter is the obvious choice for those who prefer a game that delivers a lot of immediate action while still maintaining realism. Like Interceptor, Jetfighter doesn't strive for technical accuracy (although it is authentic to some extent and won't let you perform any ridiculous manoeuvres that couldn't be done in the real thing). The controls and instrumentation have been simplified, but the gameplay is still strongly simulation orientated, rather than being just some kind of Afterburnerstyle shoot 'em up. It's easy enough to get to grips with, and the array of missions ensures lasting appeal. It's one of the most enjoyable games of its type on the PC – and PC owners have at last got one over on their ST and Amiga-owning pals. And about time too.

PRICE	£39.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	63%
PLAYABILITY	88%
VALUE	70%
OVERALL	**89%**



Thanks to the F-14's superior long-range missile capabilities, you've already got a lock on this unfortunate MiG – even though it's only visible as a dot on the horizon. Unlike Interceptor, however, the MiGs don't stay that size. Dilly dally too long and it'll sweep past, almost close enough for you to see the Ruskie pilot's gold fillings.





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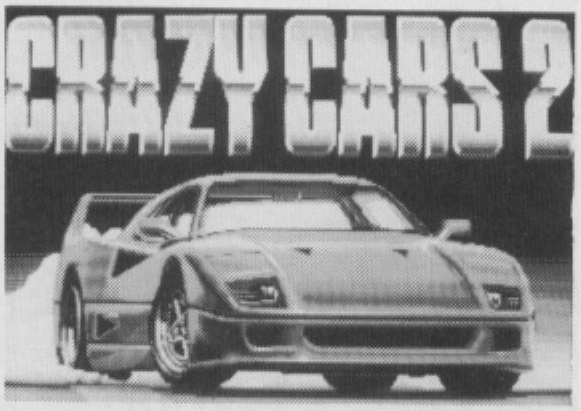
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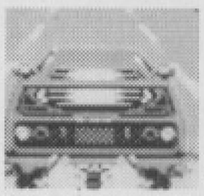
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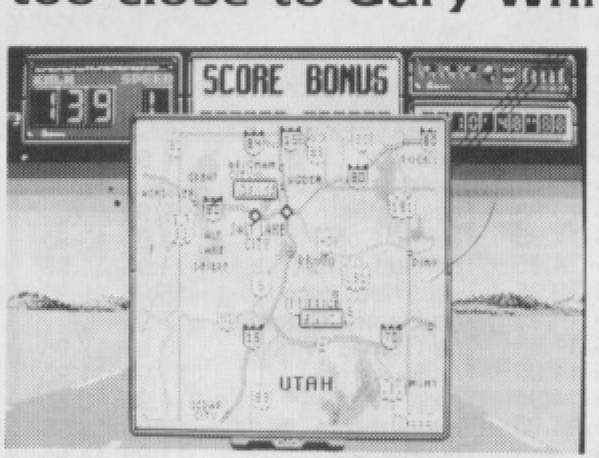
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Crazy Ca





With three racing games already under its belt, Titus goes back to basics with the official sequel to its first release. And if you can read, this you're too close to Gary Whitta.

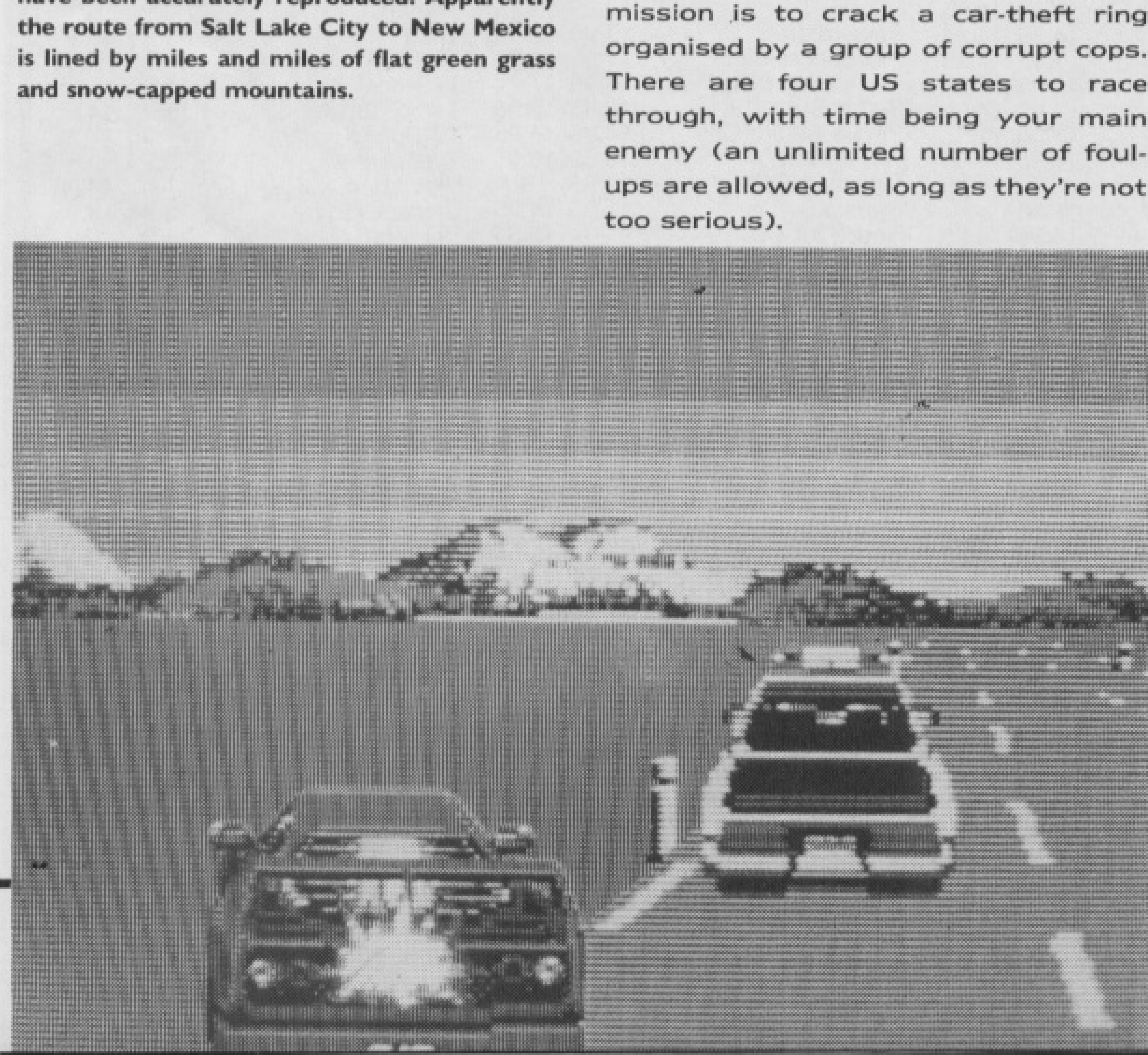


▲ **Call up the route map to show the point you've got to reach and the time left to get there. Titus claims that all the roads in the four US states featured in CCII have been accurately reproduced. Apparently the route from Salt Lake City to New Mexico is lined by miles and miles of flat green grass and snow-capped mountains.**

With Titus' Crazy Cars featuring such exotic automobiles as the Lambourghini Countach, Porsche 911 and Ferrari Testarossa, you'd be forgiven for thinking that there isn't a more luxurious sports car to introduce in this follow-up. But no, Titus has come up with Ferrari's ultra-sleek limited edition F40, which is now only available second-hand (due to very few being manufactured) and would set you back somewhere around the £300,000 mark.

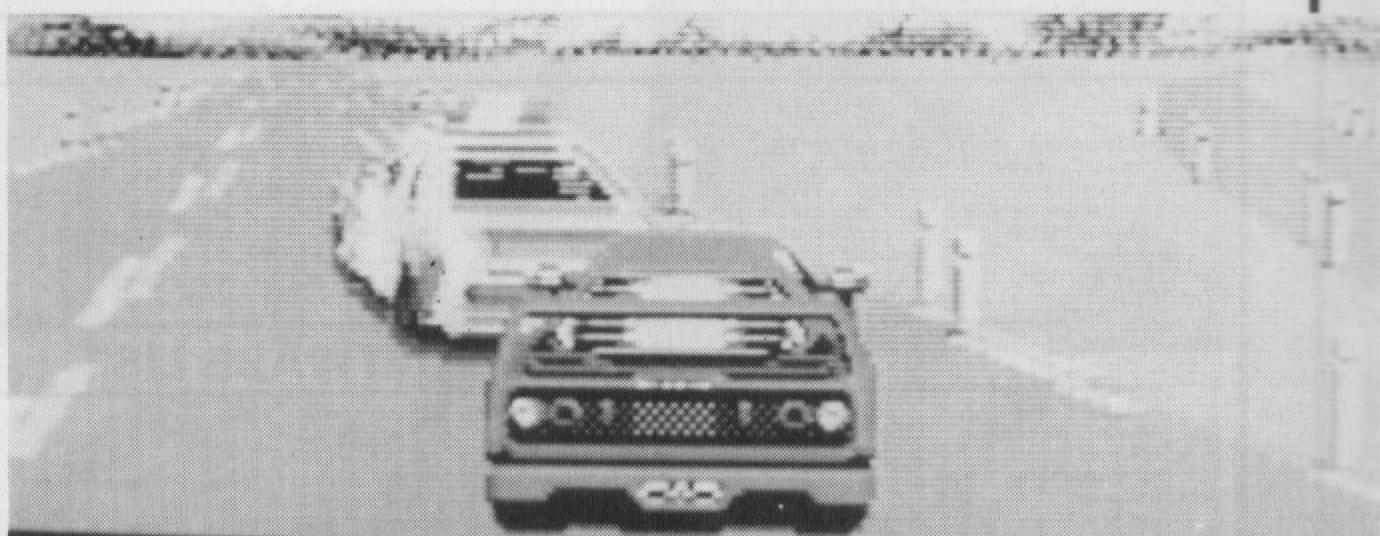
As an FBI agent in Crazy Cars II, your mission is to crack a car-theft ring organised by a group of corrupt cops. There are four US states to race through, with time being your main enemy (an unlimited number of foul-ups are allowed, as long as they're not too serious).



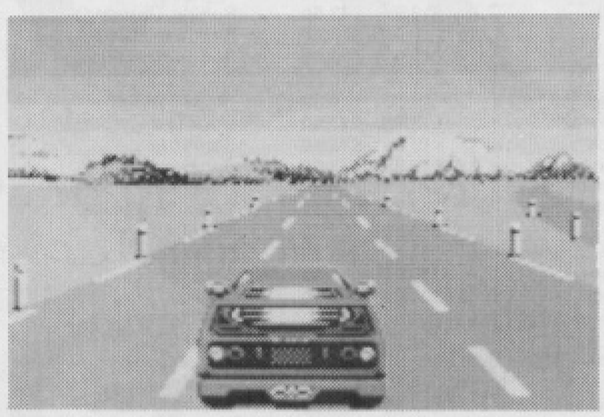


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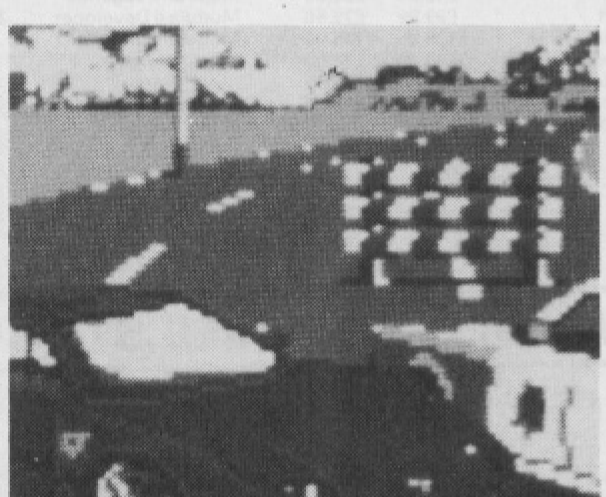


The only other cars that appear on the road are driven by the morally-unsound policemen who will stop at nothing to prevent you from reaching your destination. Forget blowing them away Fire and Forget-style though: there aren't any weapons to use, and any contact with a police car causes the F40 to explode.



Every now and then a small by-road breaks away from the main freeway for a few miles. However, apart from avoiding the cops for a short while, there doesn't seem to be much point in risking your car to drive down it.

On the frontier between bordering states, the police have laid out a roadblock – sometimes two striped barriers and occasionally a line of oil drums. Strangely enough, not even a Ferrari travelling at over 300 mph has the power to break through and driving into it results in death (yet again).



ST

Crazy Cars II is one of the least impressive driving games to appear. The car's control varies between being unresponsive and ridiculously over-sensitive, while the collision detection only makes thing worse. Other cars on the road drive right over you as if you weren't even there, and the car explodes even though you've not hit anything... aaargh! There's no sensation of speed, and even at the top whack of 327 mph, the car only seems to be trundling along. To cap it all, the sound consists of nothing better than a grating engine sound and unrealistic white noise explosions. Come on Titus, get into gear.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	45%
SOUND	31%
PLAYABILITY	34%
VALUE	25%

OVERALL 33%

A

Due out at the same time and price as the ST, this version is likely to be every bit as weak, with only slightly enhanced sound and faster game speed to make a difference.

PC

Also set for release about now at £24.99, the PC version is unlikely to differ much from the other versions.

CLIK

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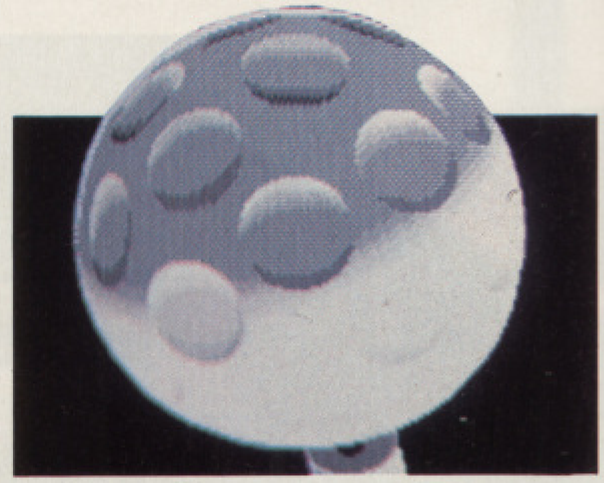
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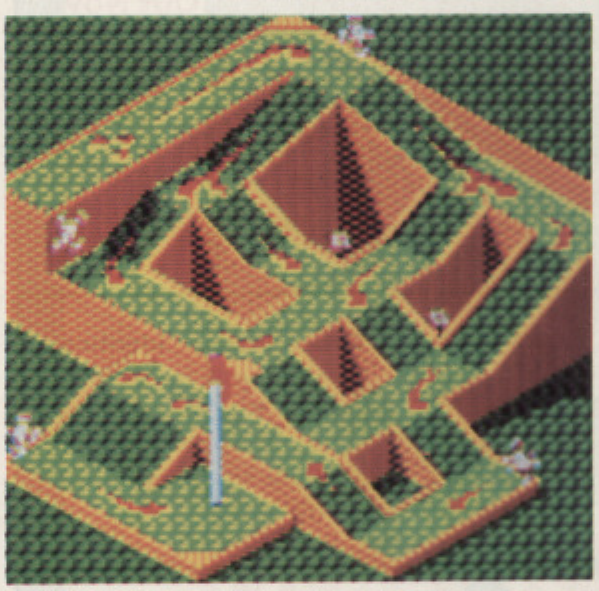
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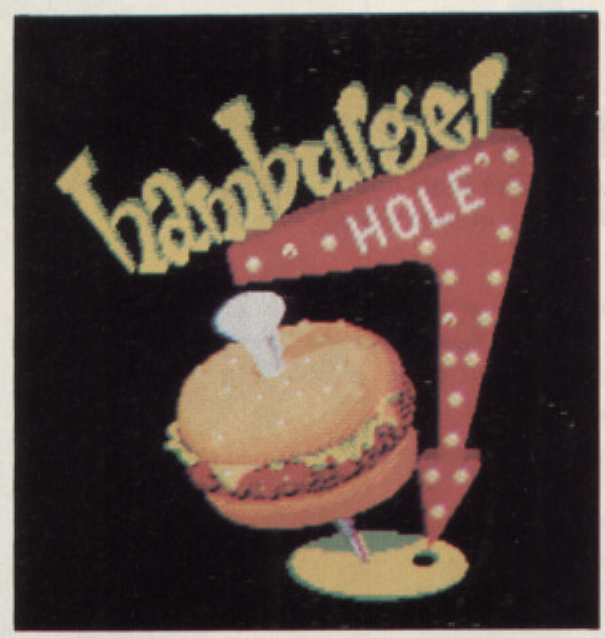
Zany Golf





Caddy in tow, Gary Penn dons Plus Fours and goes for a drive in the country.

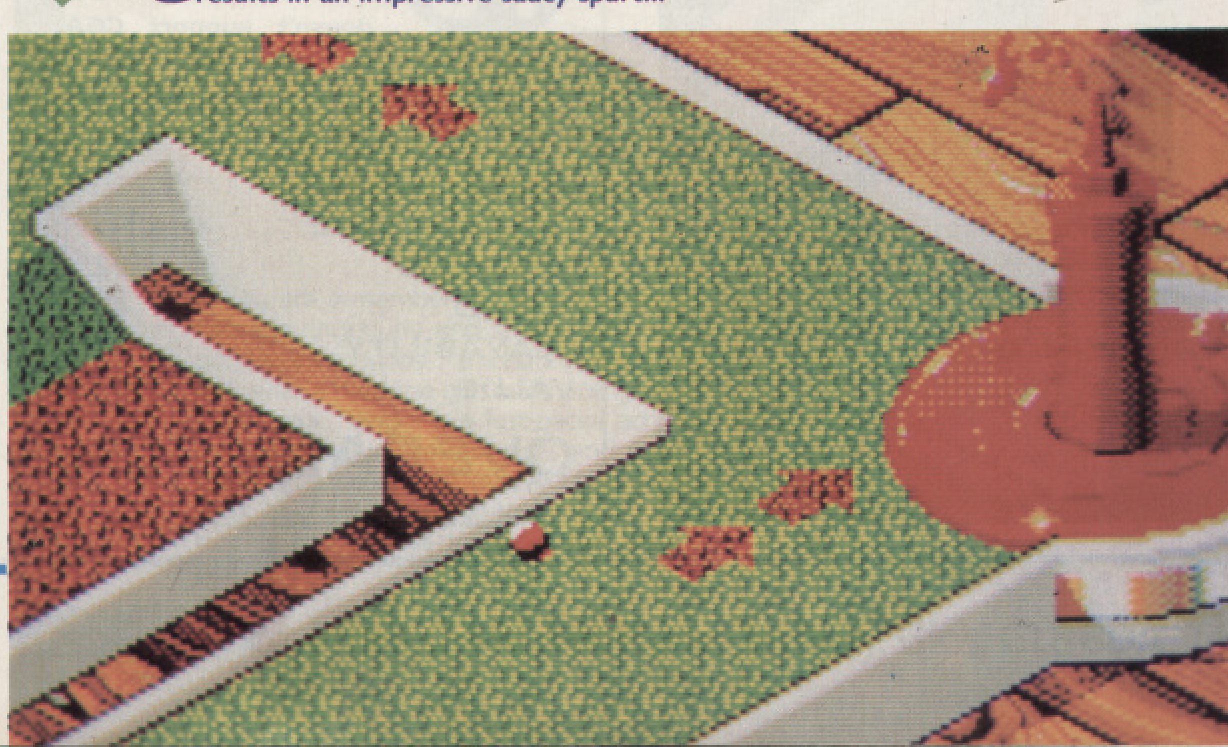




Golf is nothing more than a good walk spoiled – or at least that's what Mark Twain once said. Obviously he'd never played the seaside incarnation... Crazy Golf, that firm family favourite in which you make your way through a miniature course of crazy obstacles – like windmills and the like.

Electronic Arts' interpretation allows up to four players to participate in a round of nine zany holes. However these courses are a little more innovative than their more traditional crazy counterparts.

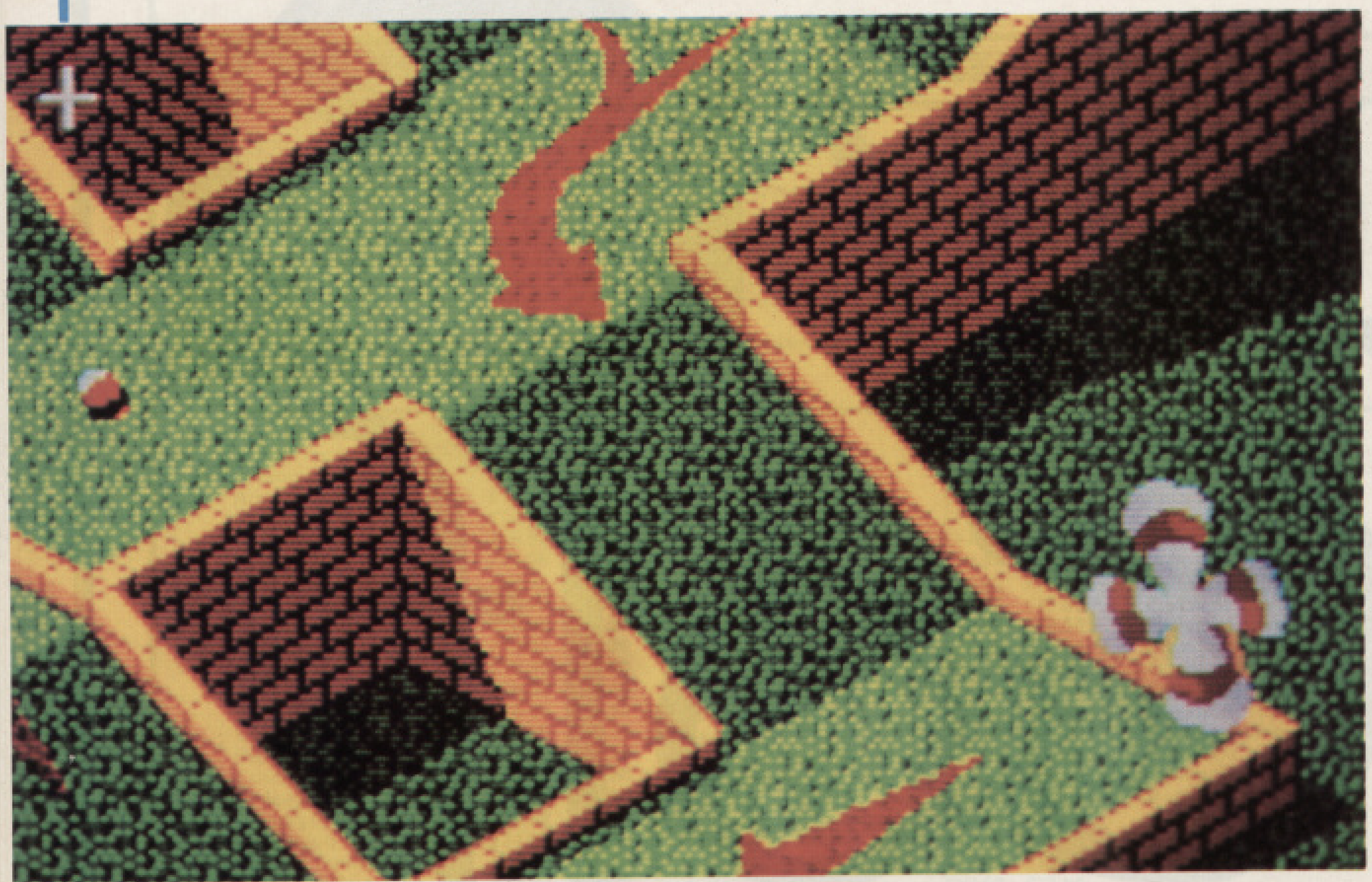
Course Two sees the hole obscured by a bouncing burger! Hitting the 'catsup' bottle results in an impressive saucy spurt...



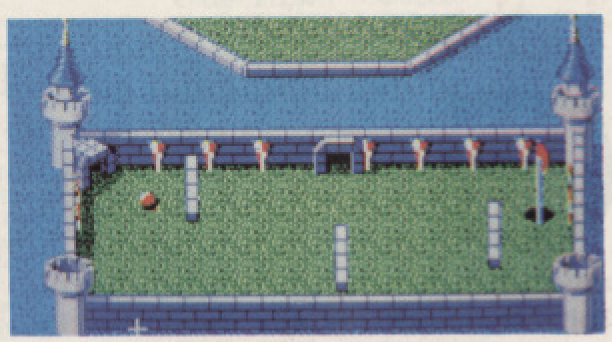


...While tapping the fire button makes the burger bounce higher, allowing you to putt the ball under the beef and into the hole.





Putting the ball is simple enough. A line is pulled from the ball, its length and angle determining the strength and direction of putt when released.



Course Four is one of the most innovative, comprising a miniature pinball table complete with bonus pins and flippers.



ST

The most impressive aspect of Zany Golf is the high quality of execution. It's a very stylish piece of software. The graphics have class and nothing looks out of place, and the accompanying tunes are suitable but hardly essential. However, despite its aesthetic and conceptual qualities, Zany Golf does have a serious drawback – a lack of courses. The first eight are straightforward and playable to boot, but it's only the final course that borders on difficult due to its more puzzle-solving orientated nature. It's a shame that there doesn't seem to be adequate incentive to come back after completing the nine. Zany Golf is an otherwise outstanding product.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	67%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	54%

OVERALL 70%

A

This visually identical version will be accompanied by some more solid sound, but this is unlikely to increase the lasting appeal in any way.

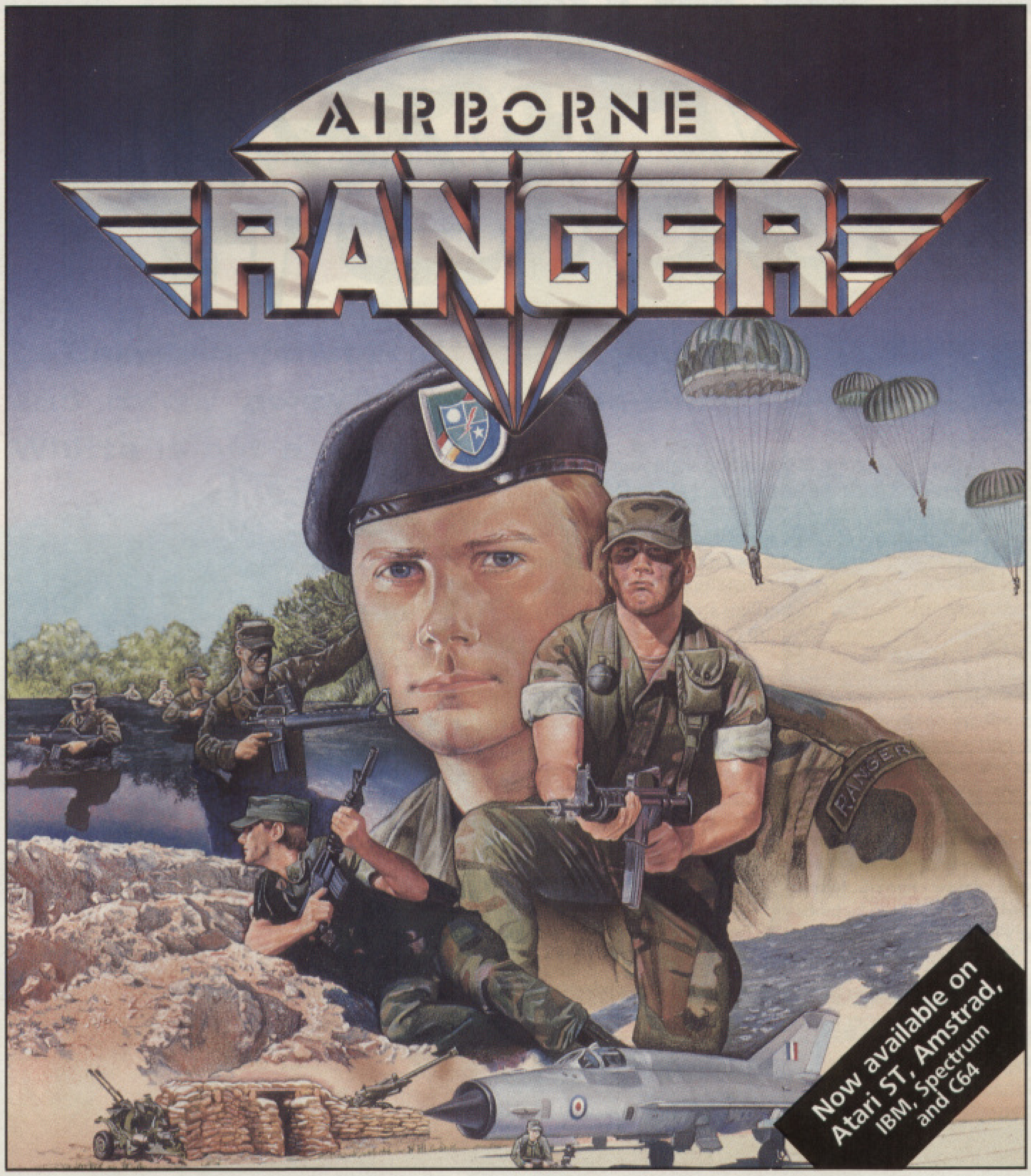
PC

Bad news for anyone with a more basic machine: Zany Golf doesn't support CGA, so only EGA-owners can appreciate the finer points of the impressive 16-colour scenery.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	47%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	54%

OVERALL 70%

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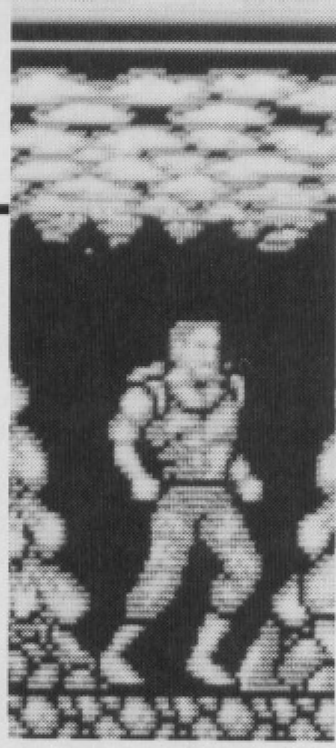
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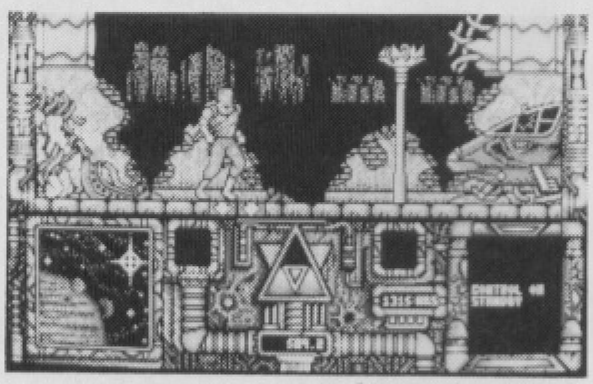
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Prison

The Chrysalis debut is set to lock you up and throw away the key, but Gary Whitta is not a number... he is a free man.



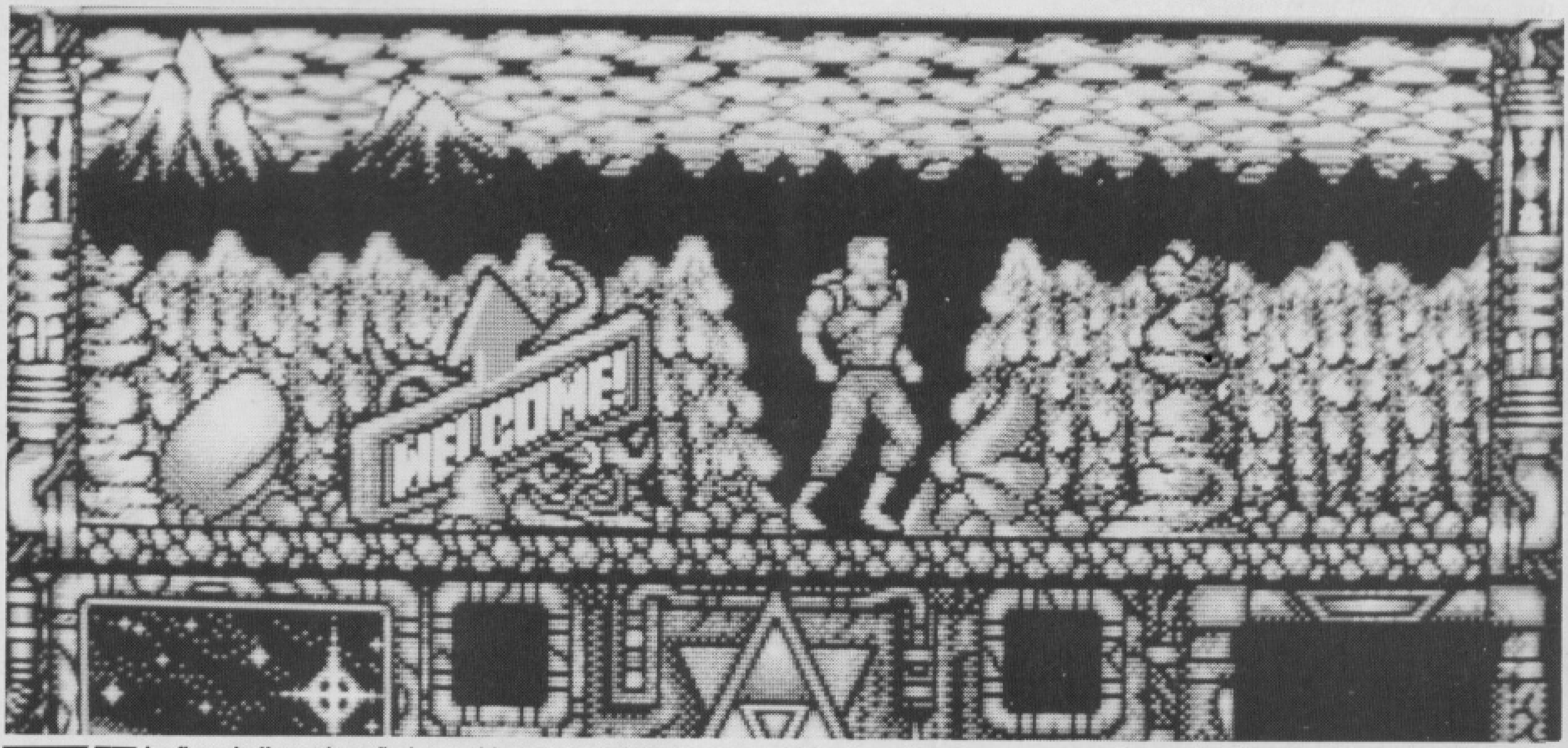
Prison's penal colony is built up from 270 flick screens, split over three separately-loaded levels. Finding the eight spacecraft parts isn't easy, as several sub-tasks and mini-problems are there to be solved before the location of each section is revealed.

Anyone who's seen John Carpenter's **Escape From New York** will instantly recognise the similarity beteen that and **Prison**, the first game to appear on the Chrysalis label. Accused of a crime you didn't commit, you've been banished to a faraway alien planet recently devastated by atomic war, now used as a penitentiary for social outcasts.

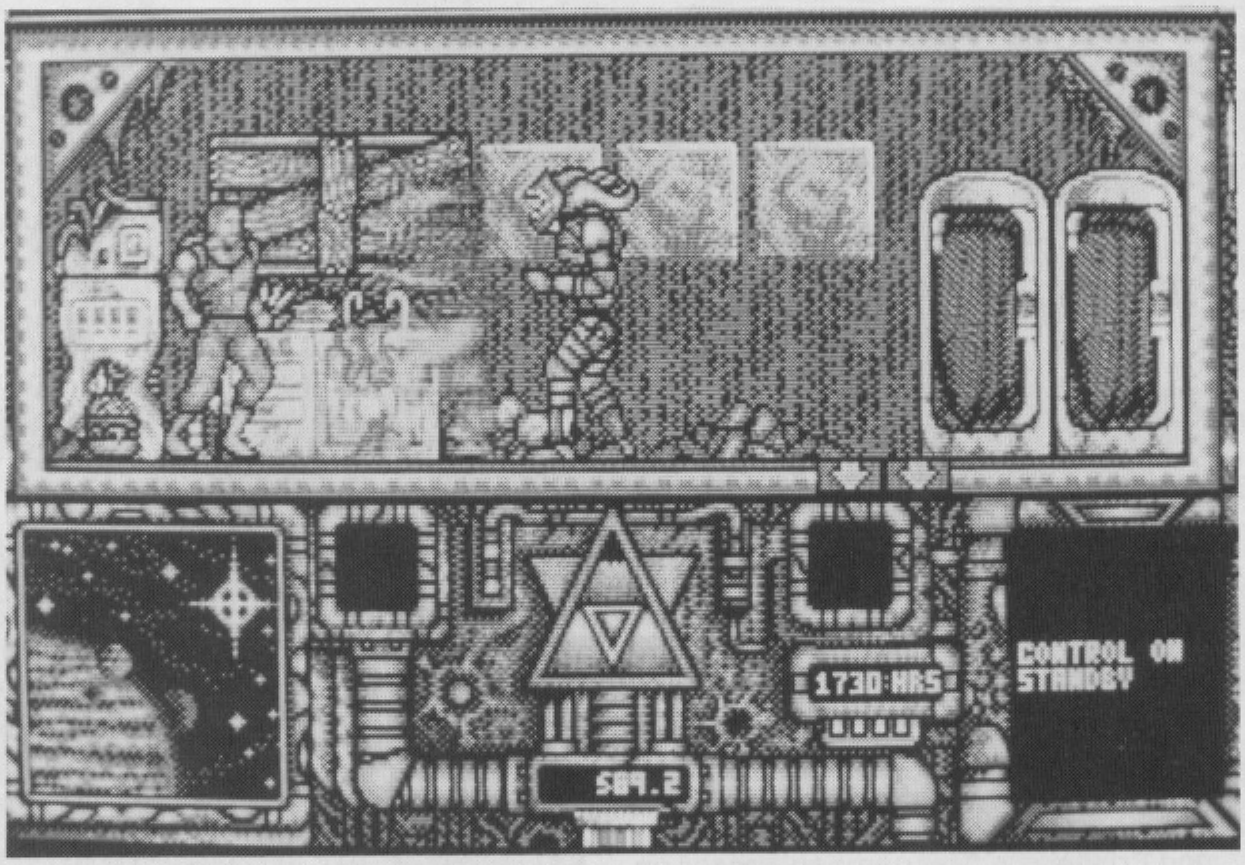
However, an escape idea forms when you hear a rumour that a shuttle craft exists somewhere on the planet, scattered into eight pieces. If the pieces could be found and assembled...



Much of the game's control and interaction is performed via the intricate information and status display panel. As well as displaying the player's lives and energy, it shows the objects being carried (up to two at a time), the parts of the rocket ship that have been found, and a menu-driven control screen which allows abjects to be picked up; dropped and used as well as interaction with other characters and the execution of specific commands.

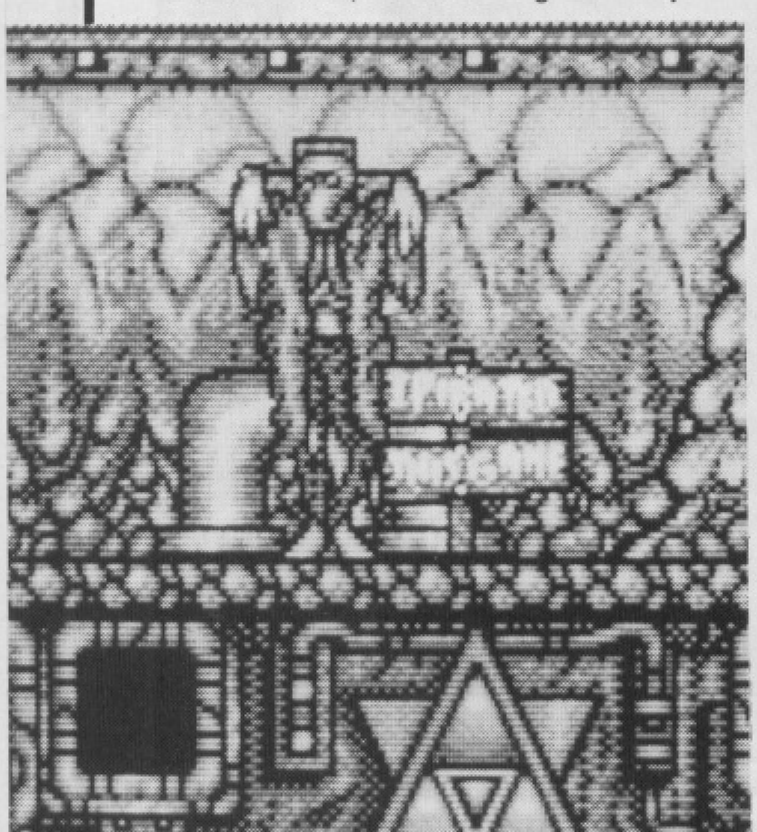


The first challenge is to find two objects, a security access key which allows the player access to the main city complex and a wristwatch, an invaluable aid, as although there is no time limit to the game, the player often has to be at certain places at the right time to meet informants and contacts.



▲ **A**lien creatures mutated by the atomic war pose a constant threat, and when they appear there's no alternative but to slug it out with them. A hidden laser gun is useful here – especially as the alien gangs have claimed the rocket parts as their own and won't give them up without a fight.

▼ **F**inding the stooge is the first step to escaping. This hairy dwarf-like creature has some vital items and information that can be traded for whatever you're carrying at the time (provided he wants it!) If you have nothing to trade, he can be threatened – but be warned, he doesn't frighten easily.



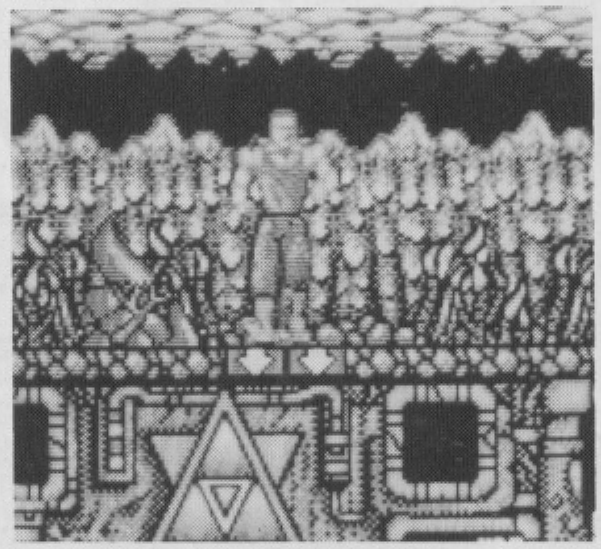
ST

Prison is certainly an excellent arcade adventure – perhaps the best of its type. There have been many attempts at this genre before, but this one shows how well it can work when executed properly. The problems and puzzles are well-structured and logical, and aren't overly difficult: you can't get into the nightclub until you've got the tie, before you can board the train to the next level you'll need to visit the ticket machine and so on. Unlike many games of this type, there's always something to do, and so you won't have to walk around the streets for hours on end looking for clues. The well-varied background graphics also help to keep you interested, and the sprites are well-defined and animated, particularly the main character. Prison serves as an excellent introduction to arcade adventures, and the complex puzzles and various sub-games should keep you occupied for some time to come.

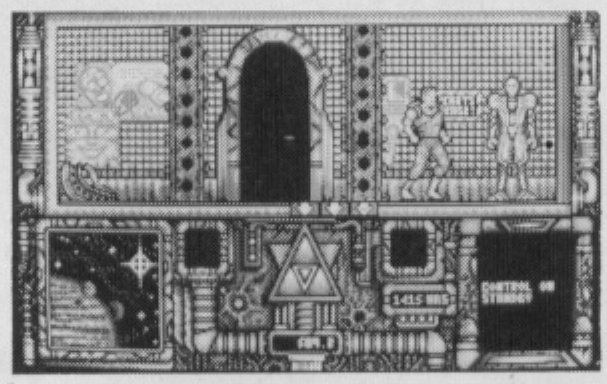
PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	March
GRAPHICS	75%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	78%

OVERALL 80%

▼ **A** nice graphic touch is the way that, as time passes, the display dims and brightens to indicate night, dawn, dusk and so on. As it gets darker it becomes more difficult to see, and therefore easier to miss vital clues and items.



▼ **O**bjects are found by using the 'search' option from the control menu. A small light on the status display flashes when you enter a room to indicate an object is present, and with careful searching it is revealed.



A

The gameplay and feel are both identical to the ST version, but the addition of full-colour graphics throughout add an extra element of polish to the presentation.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	March
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	73%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	78%

OVERALL 81%

PC

Although there is an IBM-compatible version in the offing, a release date is uncertain as work has only just begun. The finished product should support both EGA and CGA graphics modes.


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F-16 Combat Pilot



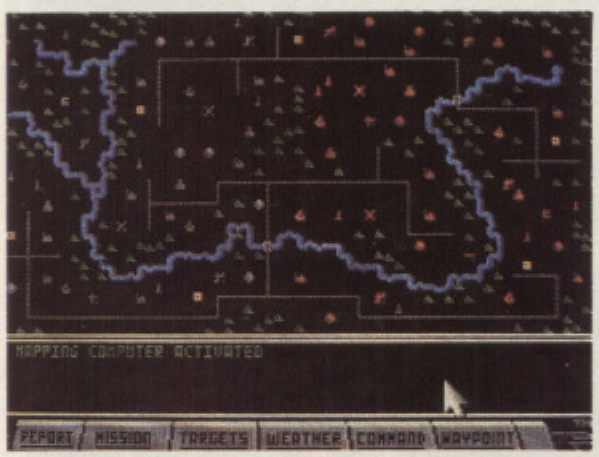


Simulation expert Digital Integration looks set to give Spectrum Holobyte and SubLogic a run for their money with its very first 16-bit effort. Gary Whitta grabs his joystick and heads for the fast-filling air corridors.

Along with **Falcon**, **F-16 Combat Pilot** is, reputedly one of the first *real* flight simulations to appear on 16-bit. EA's **Interceptor** doesn't really count, as the controls and instruments are whittled down to almost coin-op level, and other efforts such as **Gunship** and **Super Huey** just don't make the grade due to weak gameplay and lack of technical accuracy.

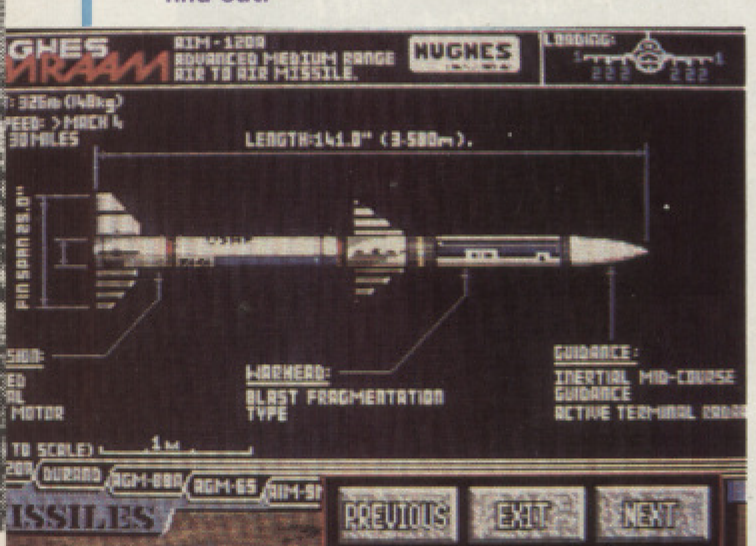
F-16 Combat Pilot is a simulation of General Dynamic's multi-million dollar, multi-role F16 Fighting Falcon. Rather than revolving around the plane itself, however, **F-16 Combat Pilot** follows the career of the pilot brom the rawest Rookie all the way up to 'ace of the base'.

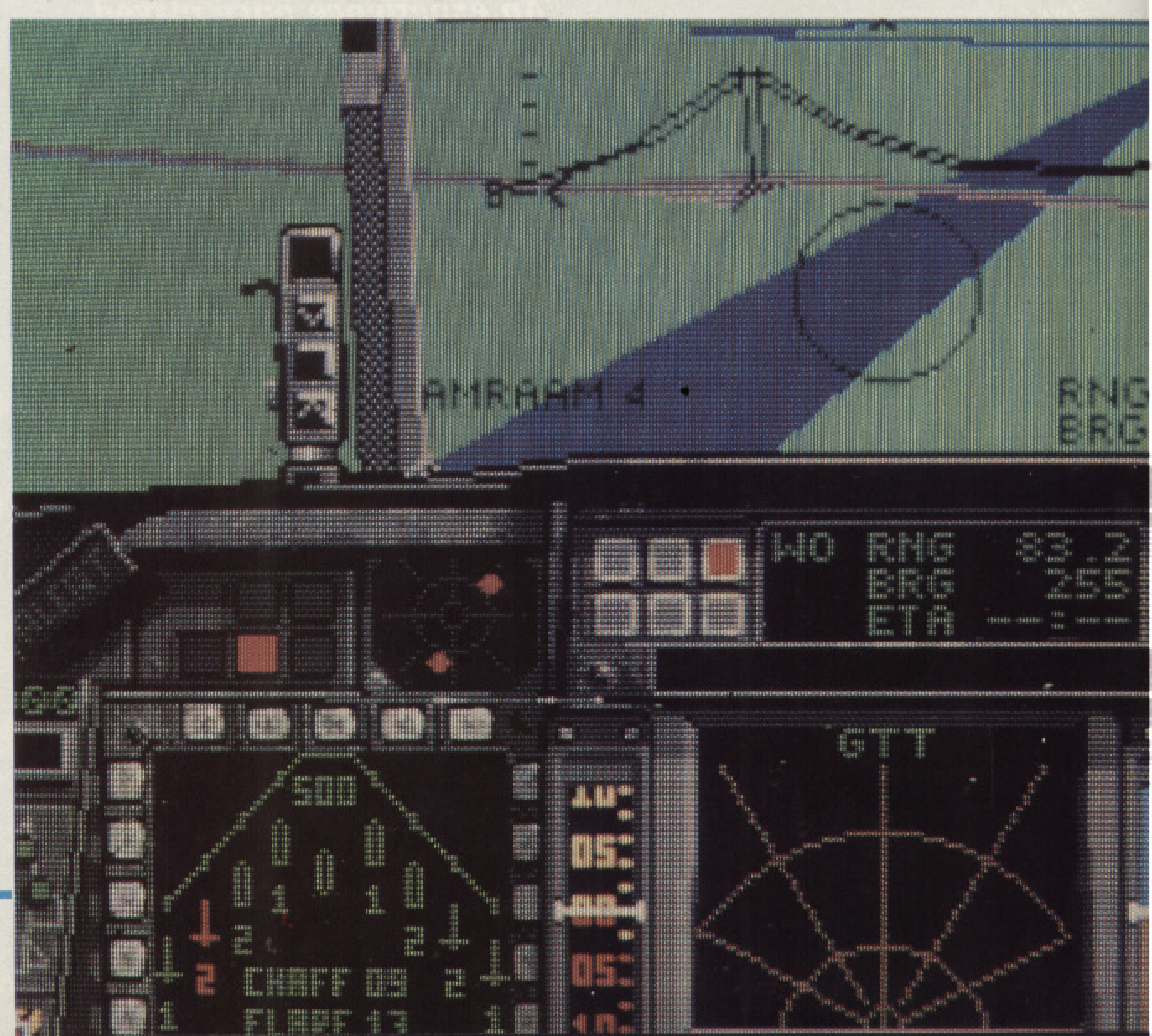
▲ A pilot's career begins in the de-briefing room. From here data can be saved and loaded, a demonstration program can be run and information on the planes and weaponry accessed.

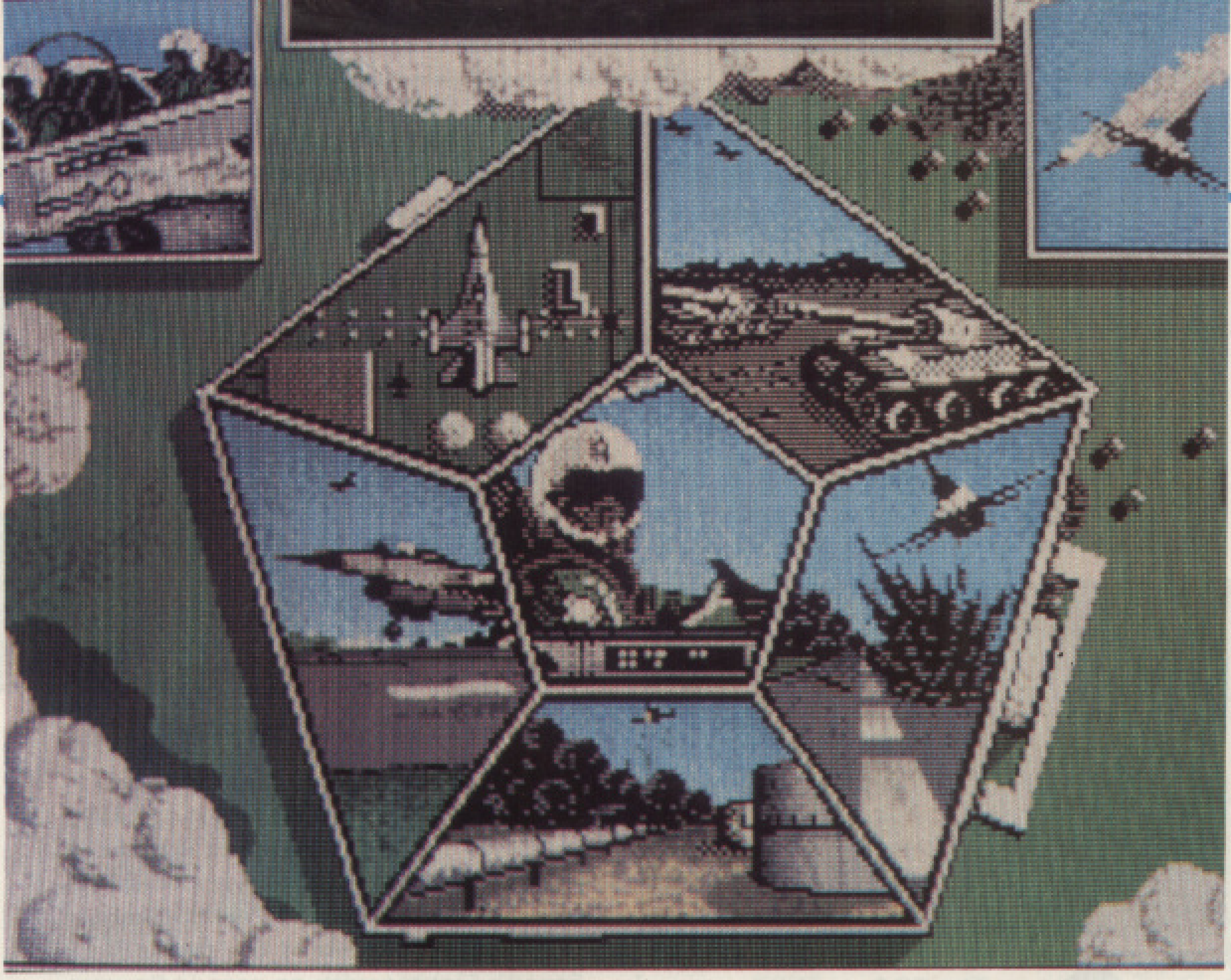


▲ Mission targets are chosen at random from a range of 1,500. The flight path is decided by selecting 'waypoints' (taking note of positions of enemy radar bases and so on). The level of visibility, time of day, cloud height and other variables can also be changed to suit.

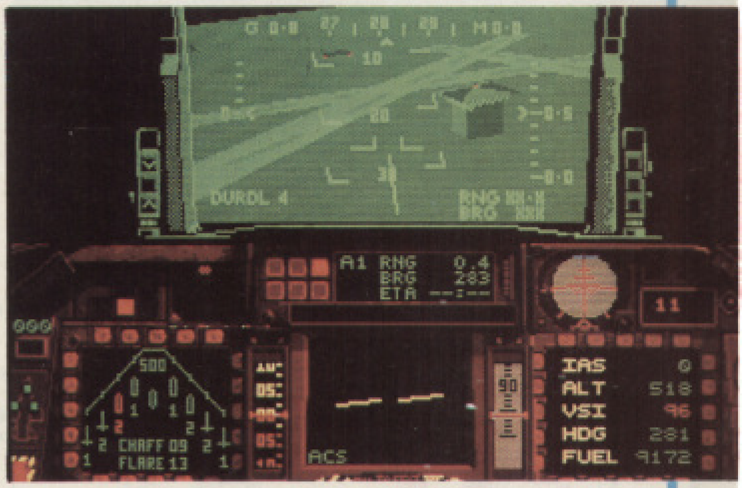
▼ There are three types of MiG and more than 12 different weapons to get to grips with, with detailed information on all of them available from these blueprints. Should you need to know the estimated top speed of the MiG-31 or the loading capacity of a Durnadal anti-runway bomb, here's where you find out.





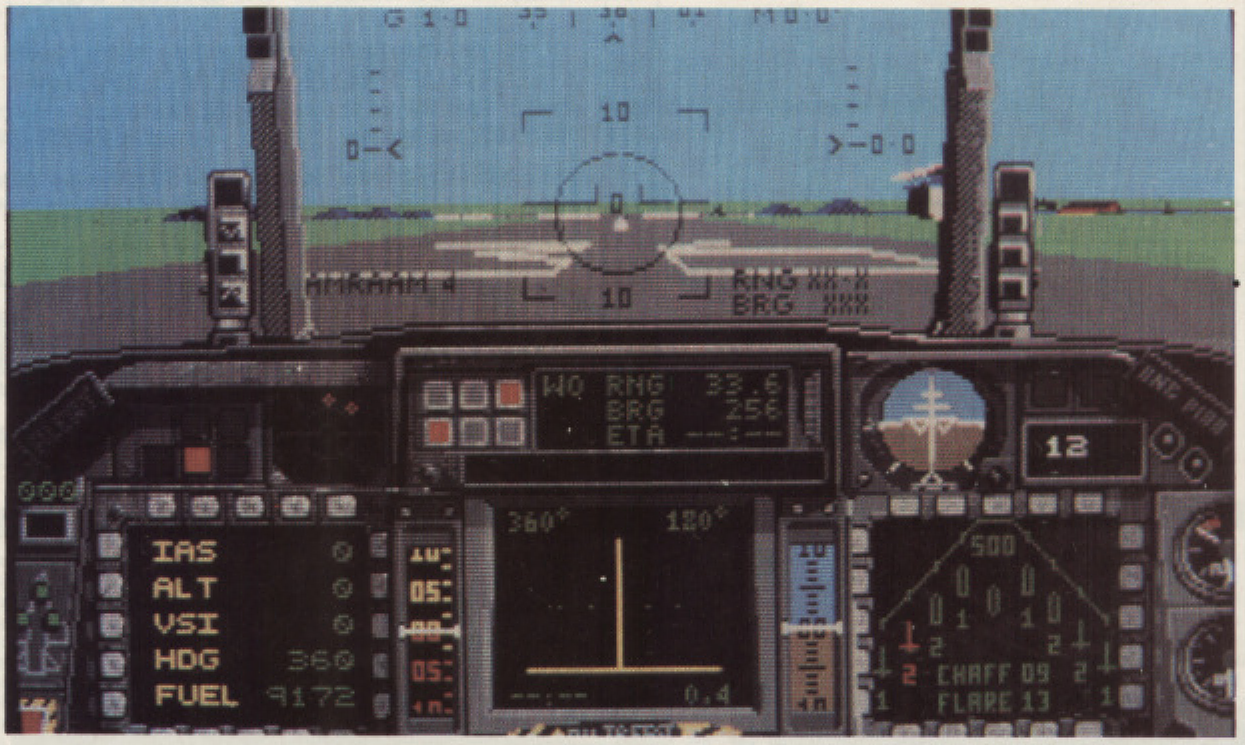


The missions are split into five different roles: Scramble (air-to-air interception), Hammerblow (offensive counter-air operations), Deepstrike (interdictor strike), Tankmaster (battlefield close air support) and Watertower (reconnaissance). In addition there is a Gladiator mode that allows two players to fight it out head-to-head via serial lead. The centre graphic represents Operation Conquest, a complete military campaign that doubles as a mini-war game with you in command of a squadron of F-16s.

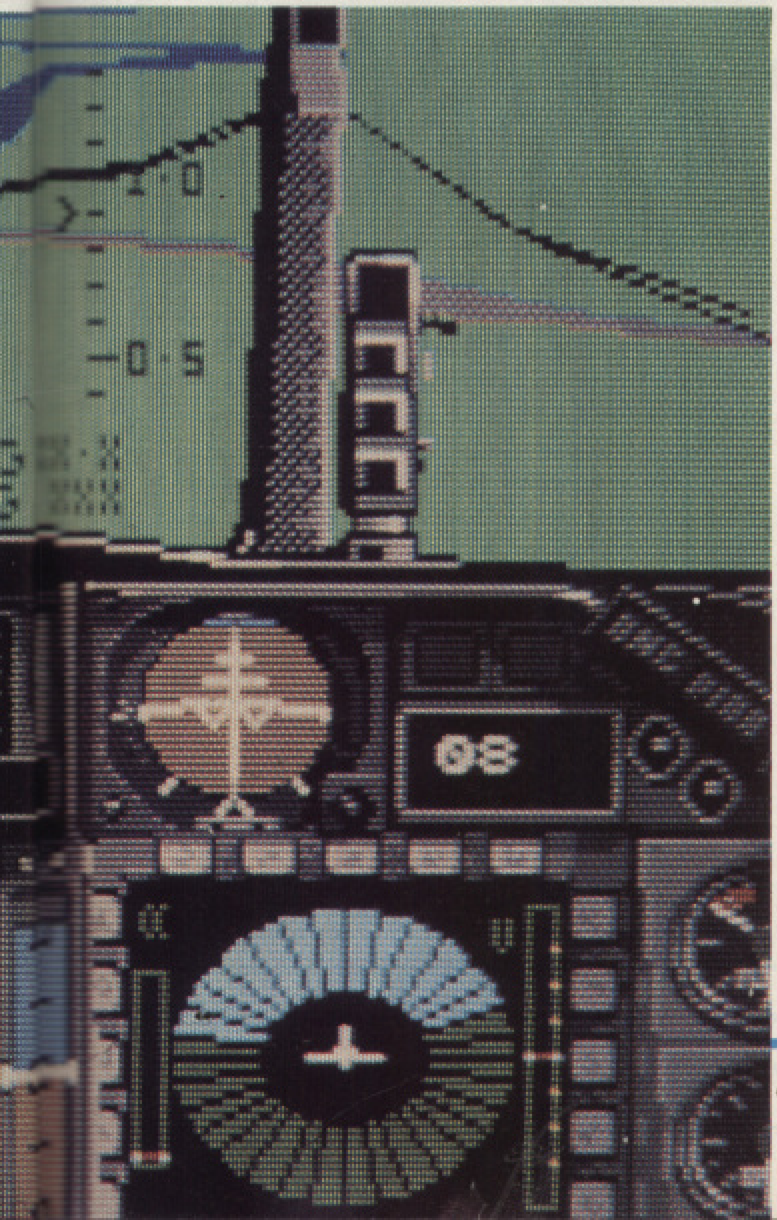


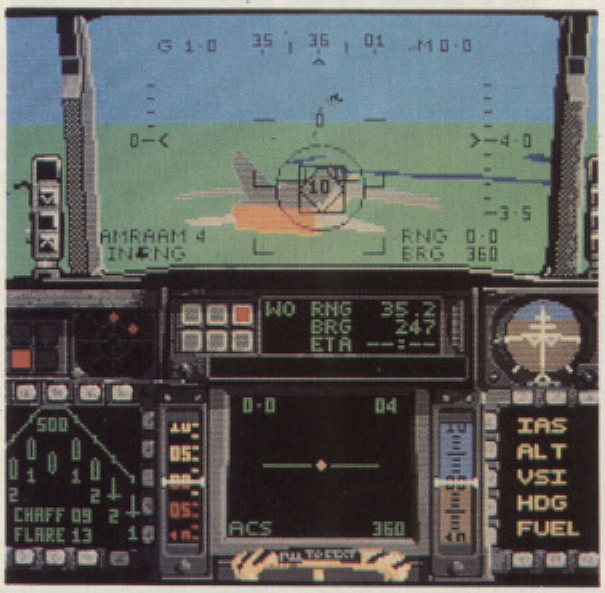
Night-flying adds an extra dimension to the gameplay. Only the area illuminated by the HUD is visible, enabled by the LANTIRN pod, and all scenery and landscape is depicted in atmospheric shades of infra-red and green.

The cockpit offers all the features of the real thing. This includes the impressive multifunction display system that allows the radar display, mobile map, armaments selection screen and all other functions to be displayed in any configuration. The Head-up display features targetting aids for the various on-board weaponry, and the incredible BVR (beyond visual range) targetting system.



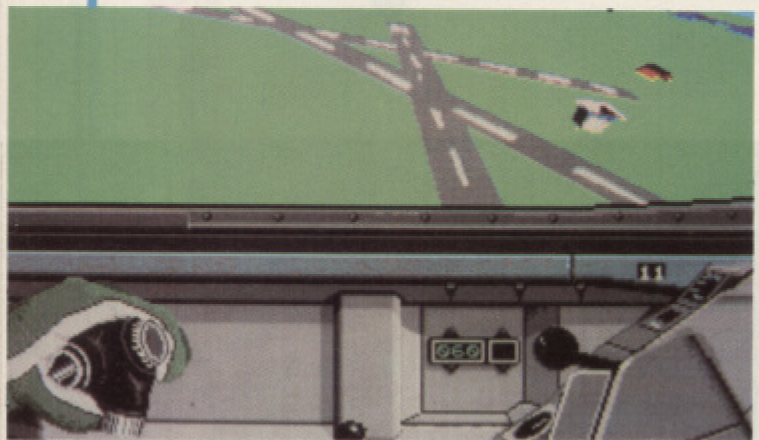
An unfortunate MiG has found itself slap in the middle of your sights. An AMRAAN long-range missile has been targetted and locked on, and the heat from the MiGs exhaust should ensure that it can't miss.



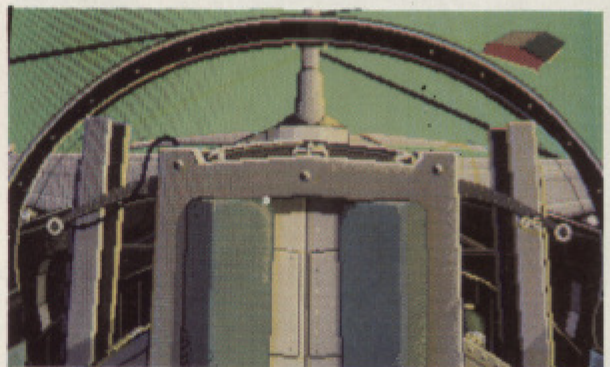


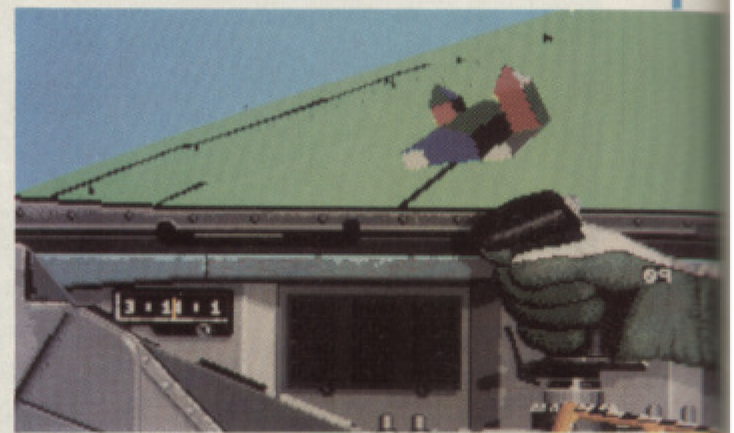
As well as the customary MiGs, you'll inevitably come into contact with enemy tank patrols and even a couple of helicopter gunships.





Three extra views are provided to complement the HUD: Left, Right and Rear. In a similar fashion to *Falcon* a nice graphic touch is the pilot's hands, but this time round they've been animated and correspond on-screen with your control movements.





ST

If it's technical accuracy that you look for in a simulation, you'll be hard pushed to fault F-16 Combat Pilot. Every aspect, from the beautifully written and presented 105-page flight manual, to the fighter's comprehensive functions and realistic performance proves that it's been designed and written by people who really know what they're talking about (General Dynamics' chief F-16 test pilot Kevin Dwyers and former RAF pilot Bill Gunstar both helped in the design of the game). Aesthetically it's not quite as appealing as Falcon, but the almost infinitesimal number of missions combined with such extra elements as tanks, night-flying and the LANTIRN targetting system more than make up for this.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	82%

OVERALL 89%

PC

The CGA version is very fast, and although the definition of the graphics leaves a bit to be desired, the overall impression is exhilirating and gameplay is identical to the ST. An EGA version (which looks exactly the same as the ST), will be released next month.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	76%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	82%

OVERALL 89%

A

The Amiga version will be released next month at a price of £24.95. It's expected to differ only slightly from the ST and PC EGA versions.

THE SHAPE OF SIMS TO COME

F-16 Combat Pilot is Digital Integration's first 16-bit project but it certainly won't be its last. The next scheduled release is the 16-bit conversion of its last 8-bit hit, Advanced Tactical Fighter (ATF), a simulation of the fabled F-19 Stealth Fighter with an arcade flavour. Following on in October will be a sequel to the Speedway game FT Racer and, perhaps the most interesting of all, an as-yet untitled simulation based around the awesome Hughes AU-54A Apache helicopter gunship (DI will be using and improving on many of the ideas pioneered in its 8-bit Apache simulator Tomahawk for this one). After that, who knows?



Fitting a LANTIRN pod at the weaponry stage makes air-to-ground bombing a hell of a lot easier. The LANTIRN (Low Altitude Navigation & Targetting Infra-Red for Night) seeks out targets that are beyond visual range, acquires them and feeds their location into the air-to-ground missiles' computers. Then all the pilot has to do is pull the trigger, so an entire enemy base can be wiped out without even passing over it!



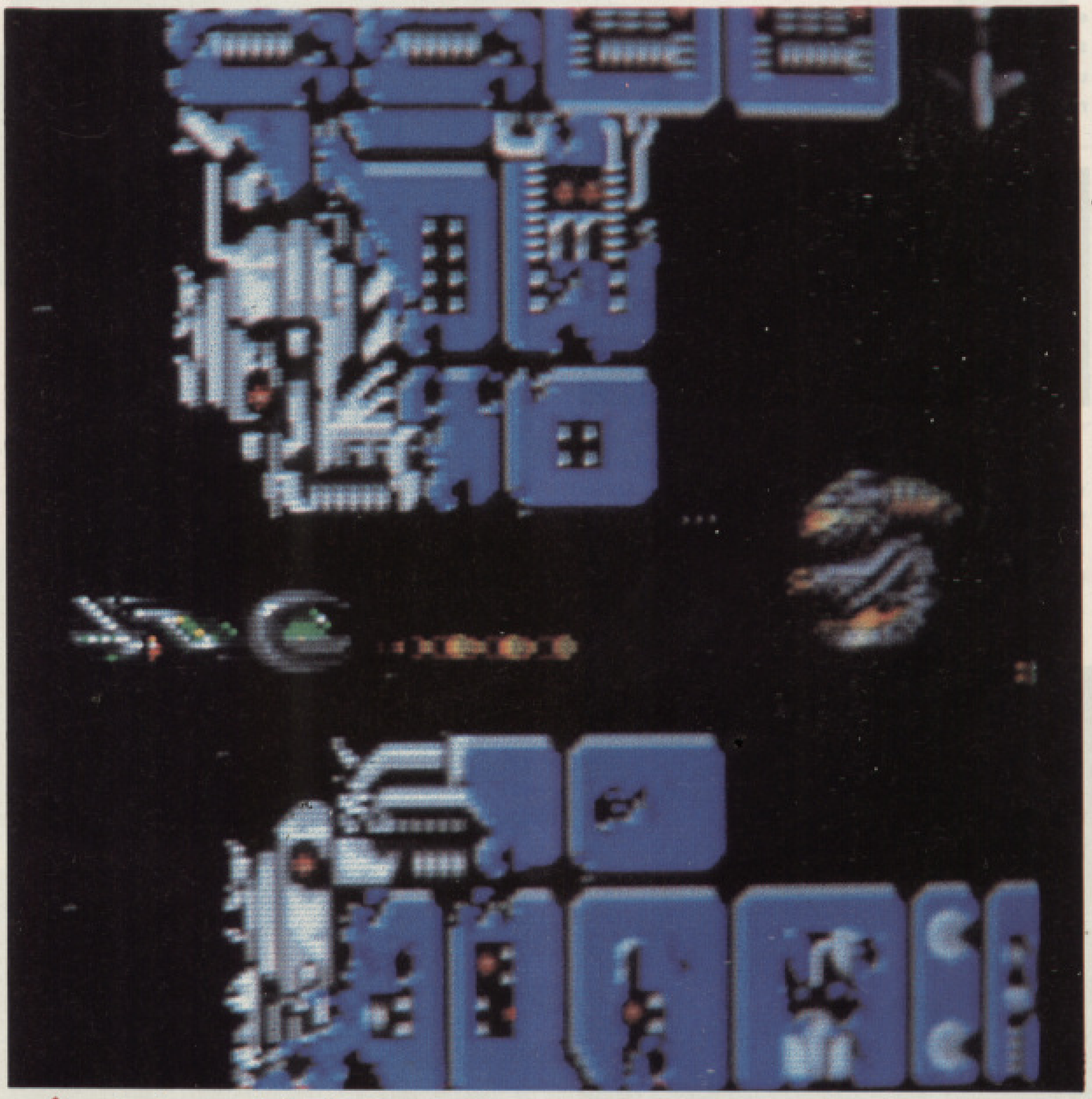
Meet the ground crew. From left to right: Tony West (Graphic design), Colin Boswell (ST Programming), Paul Hartgrave (ST/PC menu systems), Dave Marshall (concept and design), Marcus Goodey (PC Programming), Rod Swift (ST support) and Kevin Bezant (PC support). What a team!



Brian Nesbitt shoots to thrill in Rainbow Arts' clone of a clone of a clone.



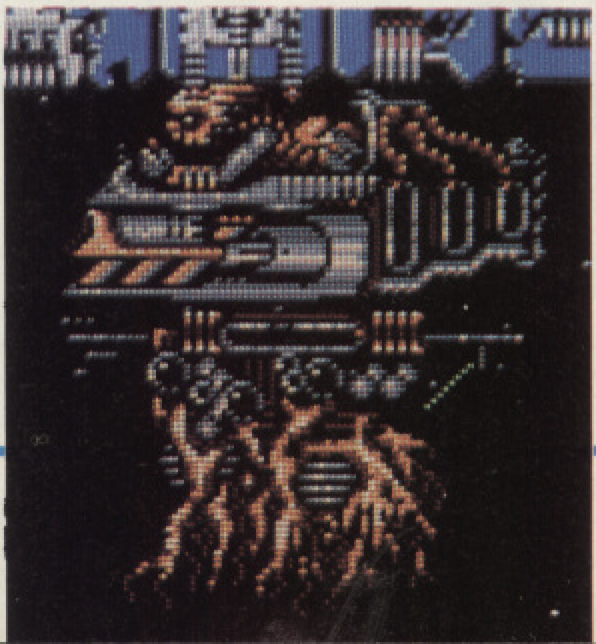
Denaris



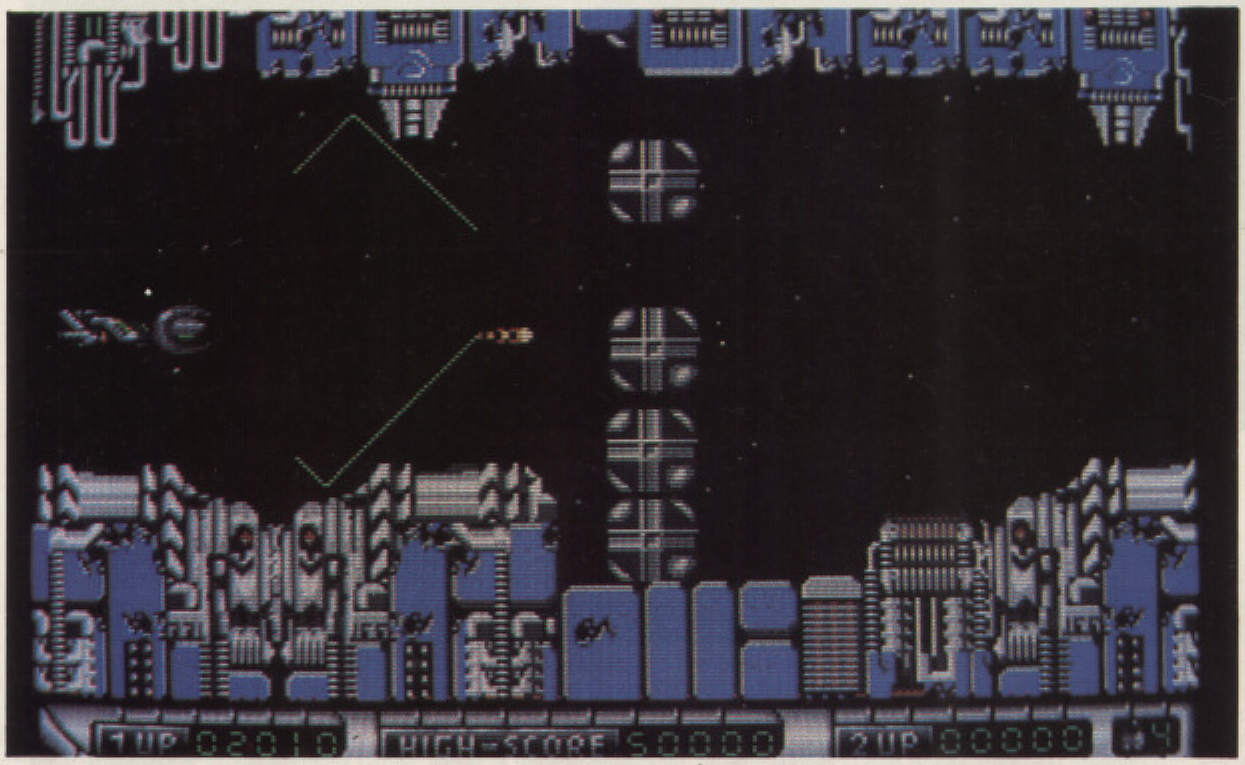
Denaris began life as a progressive scrolling shoot 'em up called Katakis. However, just as US Gold was about to release it, a major problem set in. This problem was Activision's big cheese, Rod Cousens. Rod believed that the game was too derivative of his own company's officially licensed conversions of **R-Type** – and, sensibly, US Gold agreed.

Refusing to abandon such a high quality product however, Rainbow Arts took its original game back and modified it to avoid any breach of copyright. This work is now complete and Katakis has re-surfaced as **Denaris** – although at first sight the modifications seem mostly cosmetic...

▼ Further harassment comes from jet-packing droids and bolts of electricity fired from ceiling-mounted power points. Awaiting you at the end of the level is a sizely mothership just begging to be liquidated.



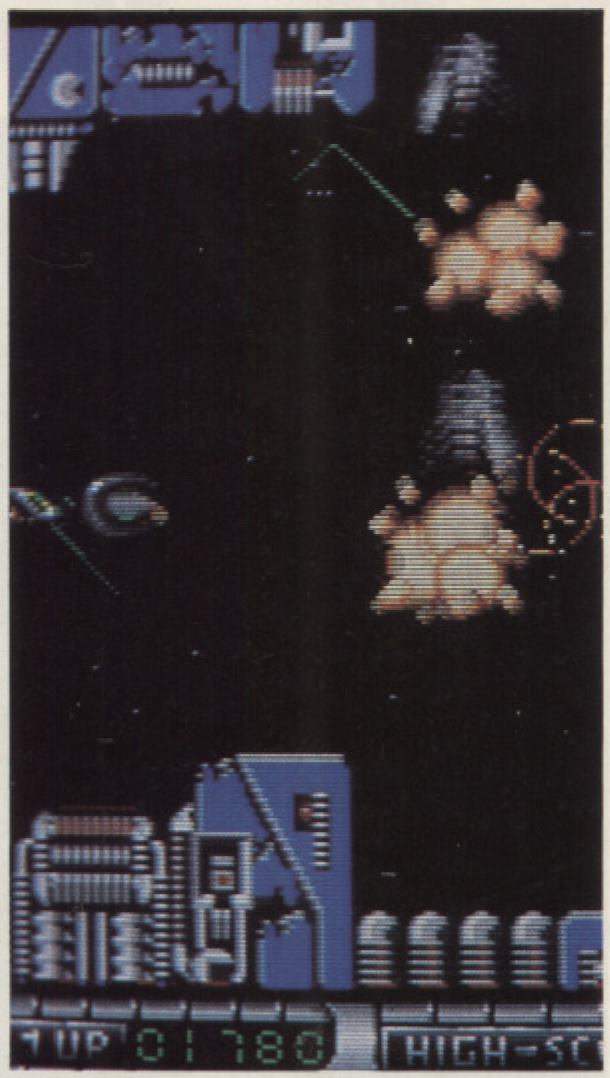
▲ The essential multi-plane scrolling starfield serves a backdrop to the opening scene, and following the initial fleet of aliens comes your first add-on token. Pick it up and a globe glides across the screen to dock onto the front of your ship. This handy little gadget shields you from head-on encounters with aliens and missiles.



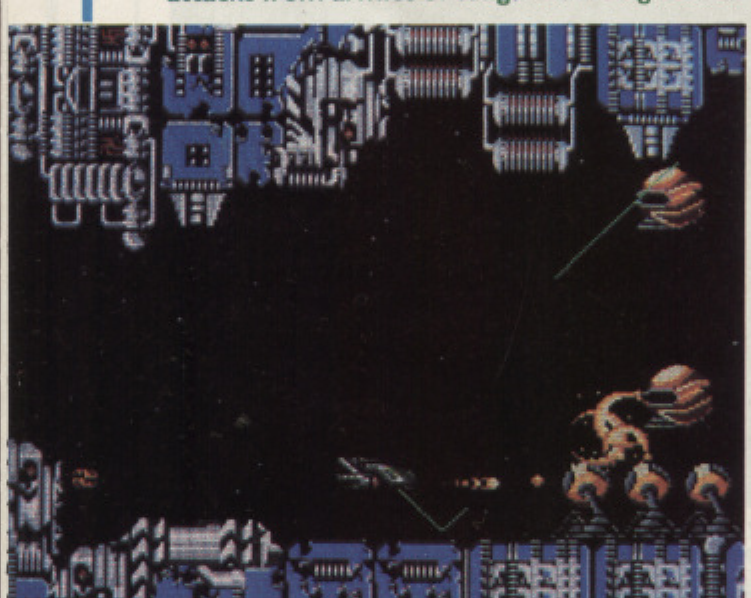


A second token makes an appearance soon enough, this time equipping the fighter with duel reflective lasers. These are a great help when you come across the small breaks in the tunnel walls, used as ambush points by almost limitless numbers of turbo-charged aliens.





As the aliens get bigger and more numerous, so the available weapon upgrades become more powerful. Scatter-shots, homing missiles and the ability to store up power for a single mega-bolt of laser fire go some way to compensating for the added threat of showers of steel sheets and attacks from armies of tough-skinned globules.



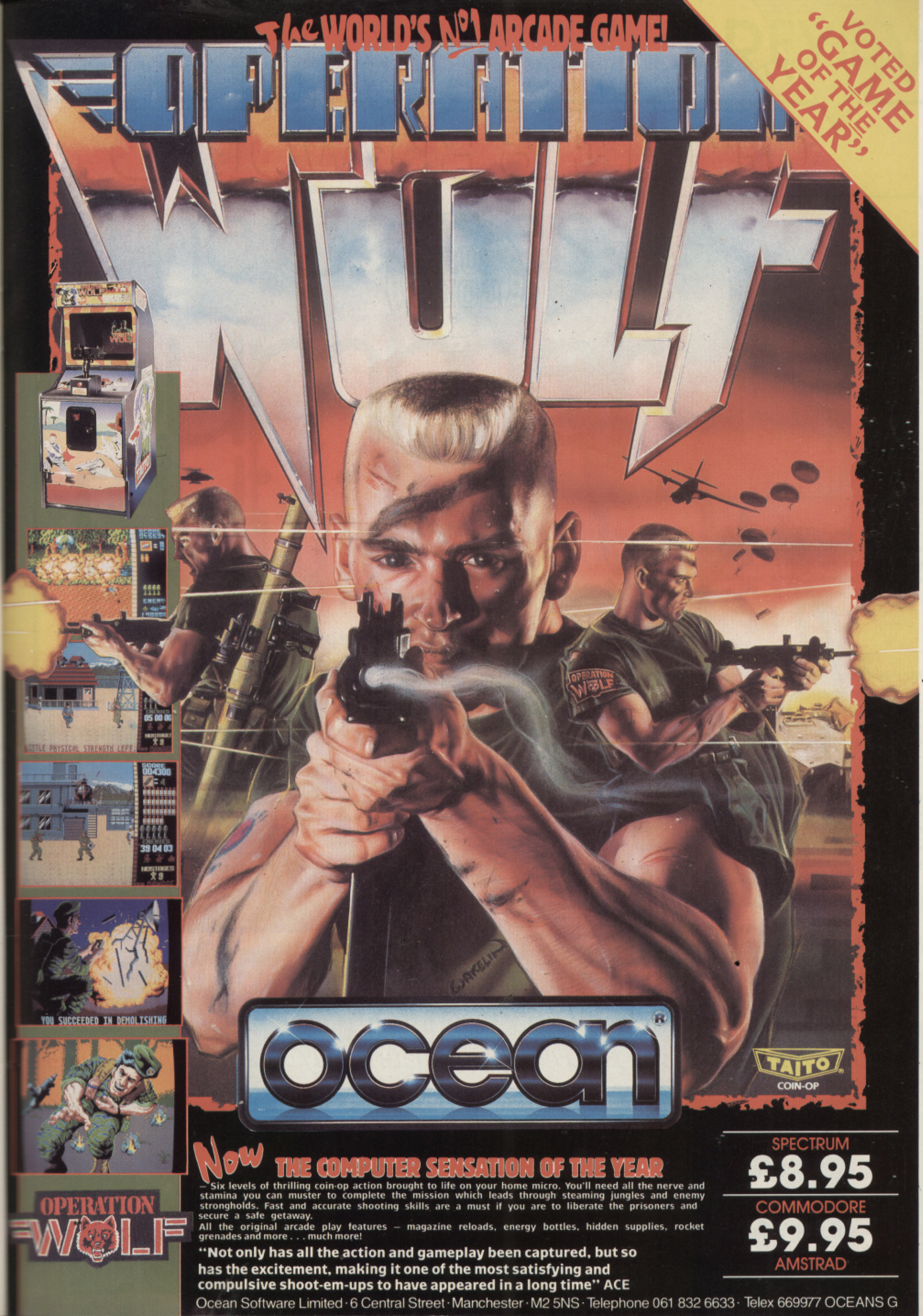


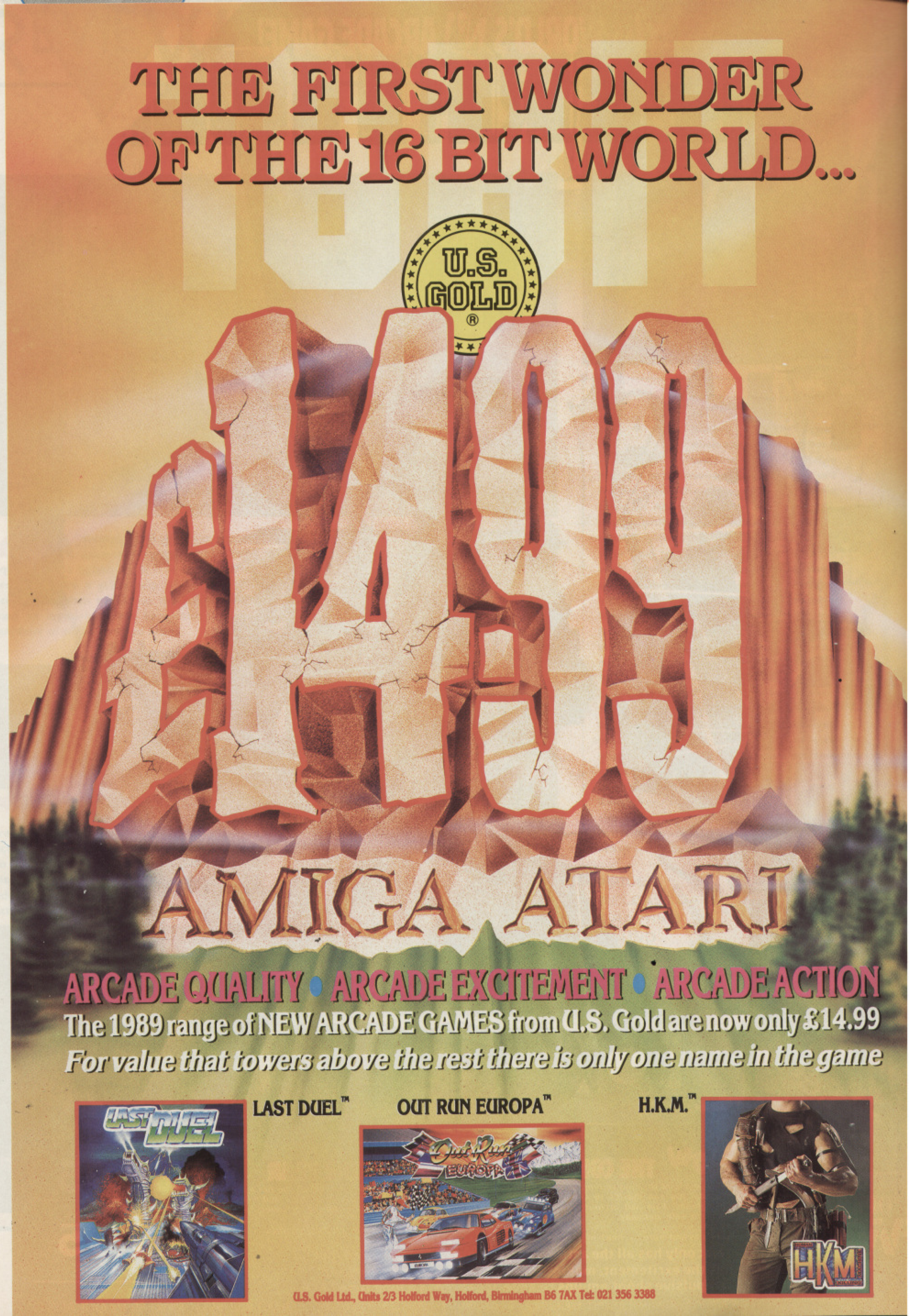
A Rainbow Arts has done the Amiga proud, producing exactly what alien zappers have been waiting for. With all due respect to ST owners, it's great to see for once that there's more to this game than an Atari port plus samples. The sprites shift around the screen at a fair whack without a hint of a glitch, while your ship has a satisfyingly solid look with its subtle banking as it weaves around the defences. Swarms of aliens and their spectacular explosions give the game a very arcade like look and feel. Sound has also been well-used, with loads of powerful laser-fire and rumbling destruction effects bursting from the speakers. The going is tough, but a generous stock of lives makes the going easier. On the minus side, the lack of restart positions on each level, means that death can be a little intrusive too, but thankfully there's no disk swapping once you've booted. Denaris is one of the most slick and professionally programmed games yet seen on the Amiga. It's got addictive gameplay, brilliant sonics and beautiful graphics... what more could you ask for?

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out now
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	87%
VALUE	80%

OVERALL 86%

ST There are no plans at present for an Atari version, mainly because of the machine's scrolling difficulties. However, the emergence of Steve Bak's super-speedy scroll routines (as seen in Return To Genesis and StarRay), means that this situation could still change in the not-too-distant future.

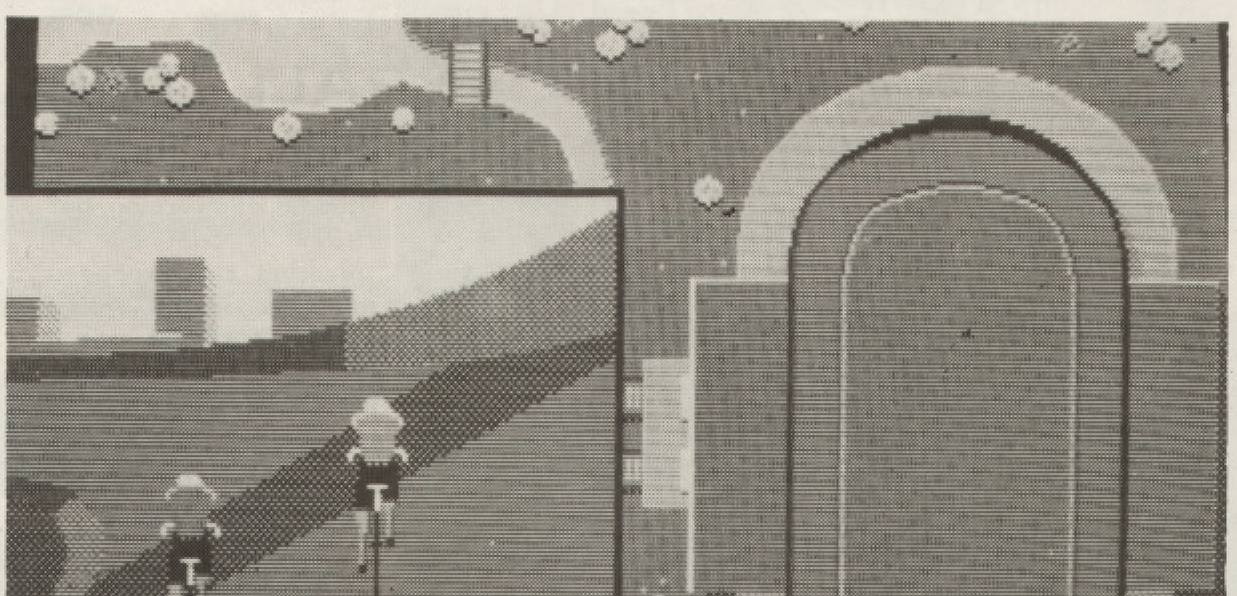

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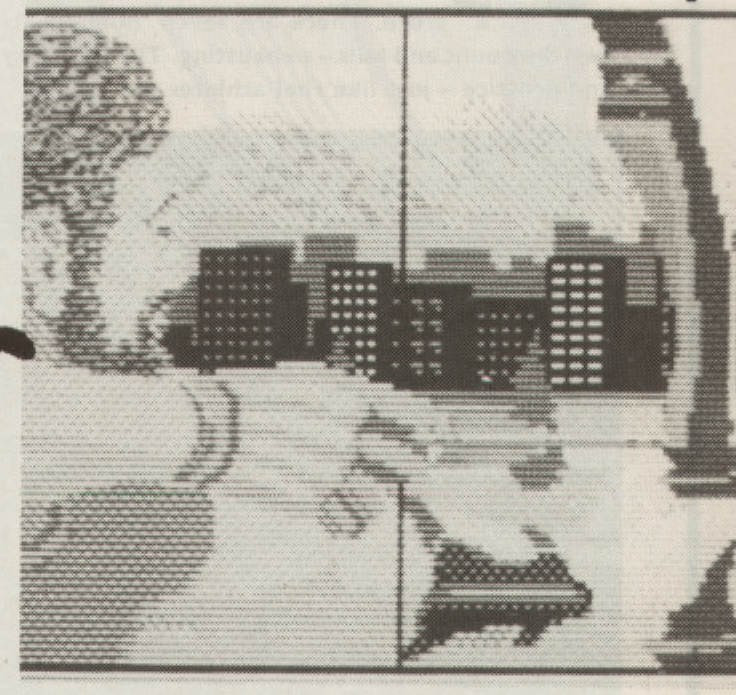

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The Games: Summer Edition

The Games series has covered at least 40 separate events so far. Tracey Snell looks at the latest package and asks: is there anything left to simulate?

VELODROME CYCLING: This sprint takes place another competitor (rather than a clock), over a distance of 1,000 metres. The split screen shows an aerial view of the track and your view as the cyclist. It's best to conserve your energy for the final 200 metres of the race.



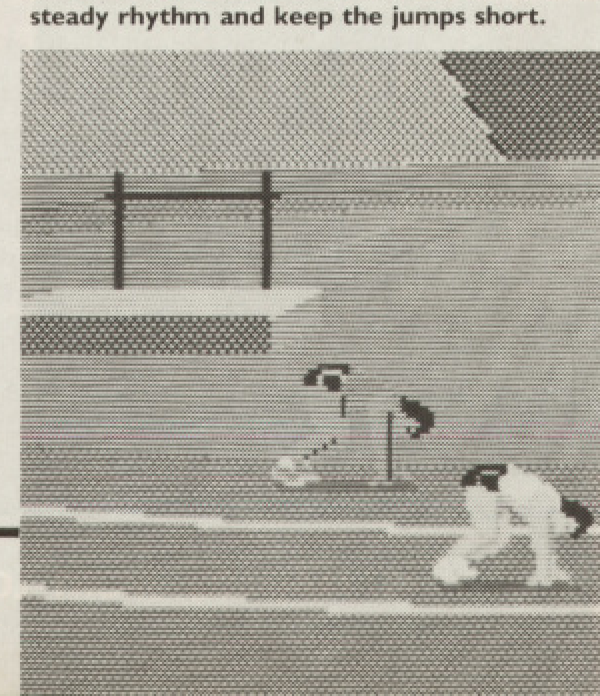


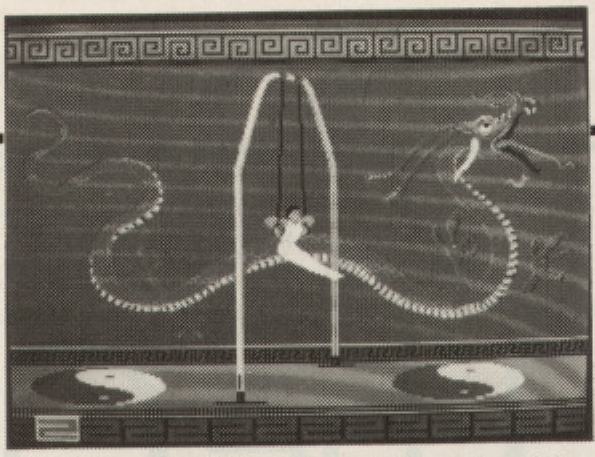
ARCHERY: This, the first event, tests your ability to control the pull of the bow and shoot six arrows into a target 90 metres away. Beware! There's a gusting wind to faulter your aim.

Despite the fact that this is the seventh Epyx games package, the company has still come up with another eight challenges for ardent sports fans.

This time around, the athletes compete in the oriental lands of South Korea. The eight events are staged in six sports halls located in an Olympic village; the ususal track and field stadiums are complemented by a swimming pool and gymnasium.

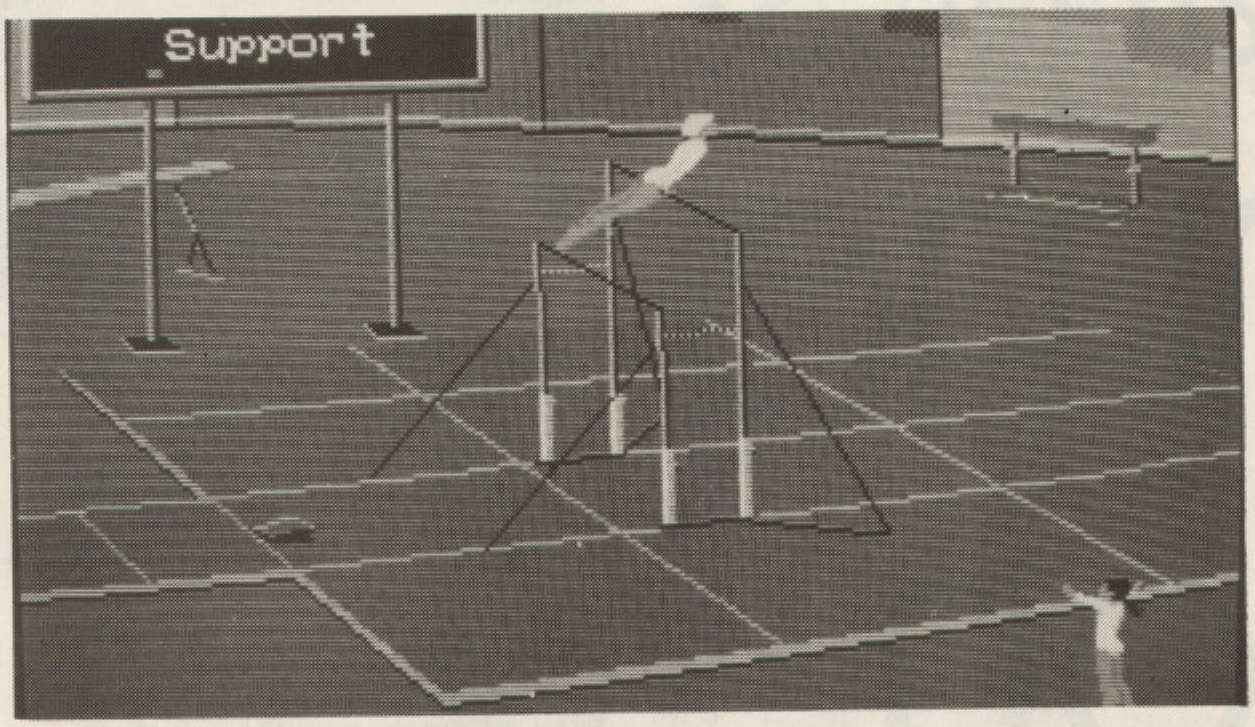
HURDLES: Race against one other competitor along a 110 metre track interspersed by hurdles. This even demands a three-talent blend of speed, spring and timing, where it's best to maintain a steady rhythm and keep the jumps short.



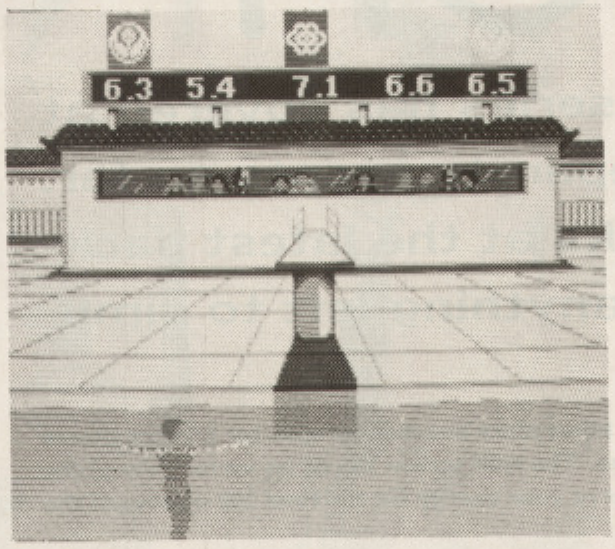


RINGS: A couple of hours studying the manual is necessary to master the rings, as a medal-winning performance demands a good execution of complicated swings, strength and hold movements.

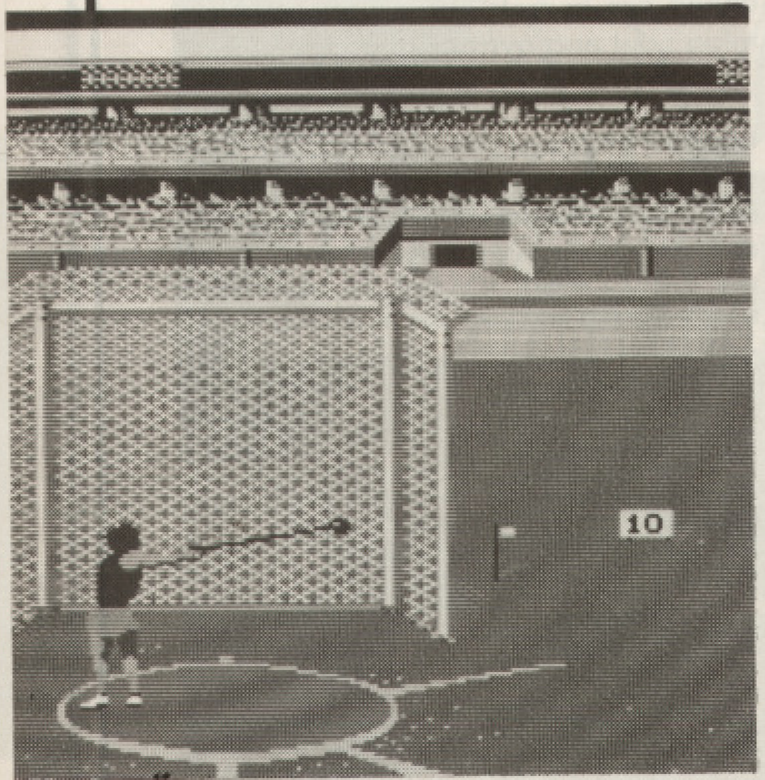
PARALLEL BARS: In a similar fashion to the rings, it's difficult to achieve a good score. There are seven 'hold and connection' positions, 13 possible sequences and two dismount and falls – exhausting. The best way to plan a routine is to use the "help play" mode and practice – just like real athletes do!



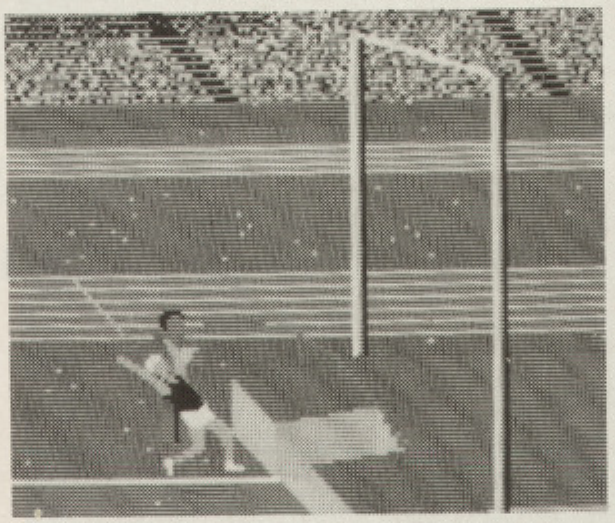
DIVING: Either backward or forward dives can be attempted – the choice is yours. Five judges award marks from 0 to 5 for the type, combination and variation of dives, as well as for a gracious entry into the water.



HAMMER THROW: Standing in a small circle, you have three attempts to throw the hammer as far as you can. Increase the swing of the solid ball once you get the rhythm, then enter a spin. After about five body turns you release the hammer – and try not to hit one of the judges.



POLE VAULT: Probably the easiest sport to master – on the computer that is – this event sees your sportsman use a flexible pole to help him over the crossbar, which can be raised to a height of your choice. Higher jumps demand a faster approach speed.



PC

Despite the fact that the PC lacks good graphics and sound effects, especially compared to those for the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST, **The Games: Summer Edition** is a winner. For a start, Epyx has vastly improved the graphics – and despite the fact that this latest Games edition supports the all graphics standards (including VGA) – it still manages to retain all the playability that the series is famous for. The options are clearly displayed and mostly useful – for example, world records are retained in memory and the awards ceremony comes complete with national anthems! The practice mode is also extremely useful for the events that are particularly difficult to master. Unfortunately the sound effects are a bit limited, but this hardly detracts from the enjoyment and the toggle option is there if you want it. This is one game that won't be left on the top shelf for too long.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	May
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	87%
VALUE	69%

OVERALL 79%

A

Work has only just begun on this version, but Epyx is confident of meeting the proposed July release date. Apart from the price tag of £19.99, not a great deal is known at this stage but we can only hope that better use is made of the Amiga's graphics than in the last Epyx release, **California Games**.

ST

Once again due out in May at £19.99, this version is at the same stage of development as its Amiga counterpart. Look out for updates on both version in a future issue.


TITAN
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AMSTRAD ACTION
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ST & AMIGA FORMAT
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Hybris



Always happy to nuke a few space gooks, Ciaŕan Brennan greases up his joystick and launches into Discovery's unusual Scandinavian/American joint venture.

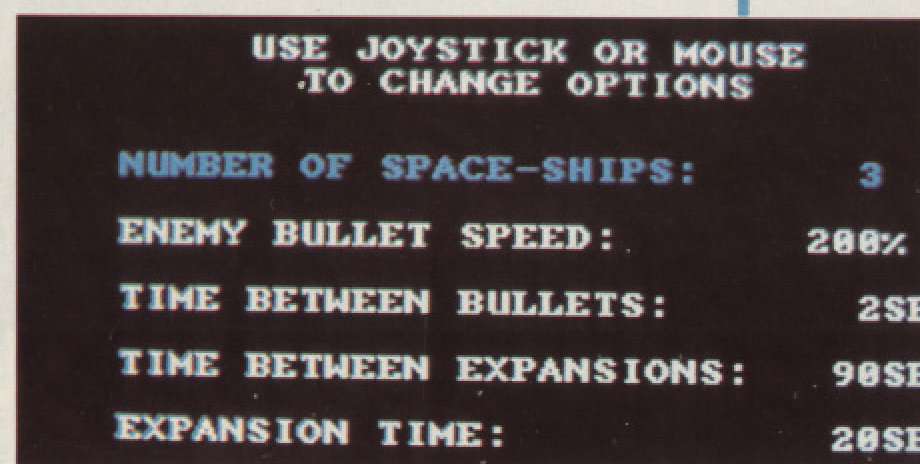


Self portraits from the two programmers adorn the demo sequence – but do they expect us to believe that they really look like this?

Clear a complete wave of nasties to collect a bonus – 1,000 points for the smaller attack patterns.

Discovery Software first came to the attention of the British games-playing public as the programming team responsible for Ocean's conversion of **Arkanoid**. The American publisher has now signed a distribution deal with Gainstar and, along with **Sword Of Soldan** (Page 36), this horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up is the first product to be brought into the country under the deal.

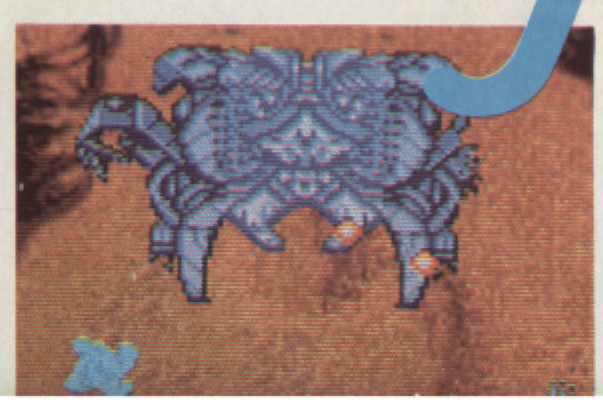
Nothing new is either promised or delivered from this horizontal scroller, but if the action is fast enough and there are plenty of aliens to blast then who cares about innovation?



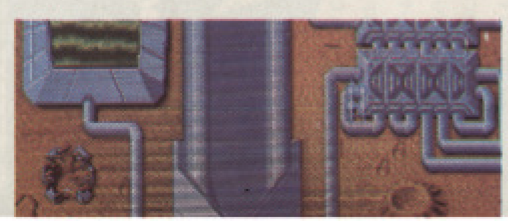
Press space bar during the attract sequence to reveal this options screen which allows you to alter most of the game's parameters to your taste. This however can be taken to far, resulting in a game that's all too easy to complete.

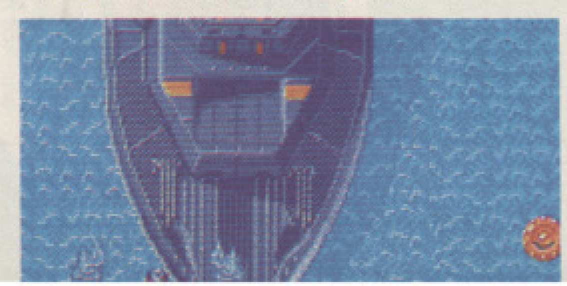
THE FIVE STAGES

The basic craft can hold up to five bolt-on weapon systems, picked up by shooting and collecting the imaginatively numbered icons (you guessed it – they're called one to five). Better still, each separate weapons system can be expanded (by twirling the joystick) up to three times to gain even more death-dealing powers.





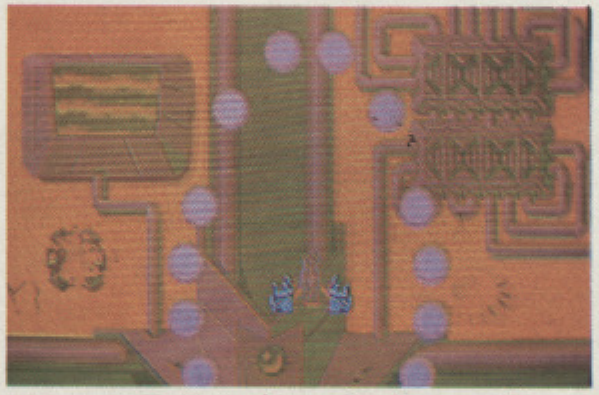




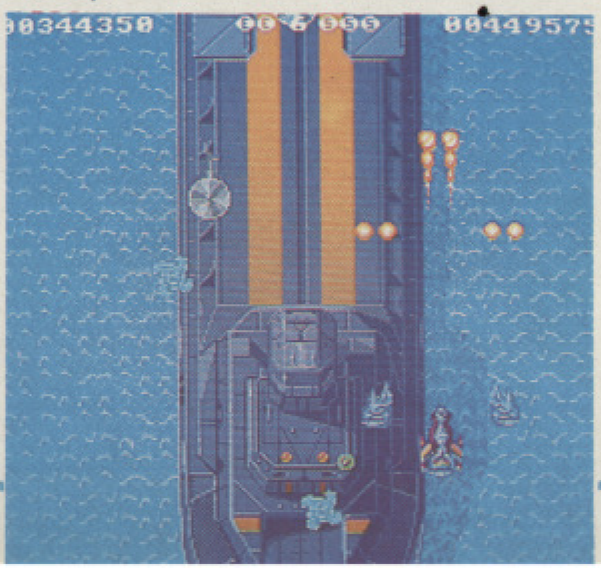


A slight variation on the end of level mothership theme sees the larger ship appear halfway along each of the three levels as well as at the end. First time around it's impossible to destroy this ship – the idea is to bombard it with enough fire to make it retreat.

Smart bombs are especially useful in the early stages before the ship reaches its maximum destruction congiguration. Although this option can be accessed via the space bar, it's handier to use the joystick: simply spin the stick (using the 'expansion' method) with the fire-button held down and BOOOM! . . . wipeout.



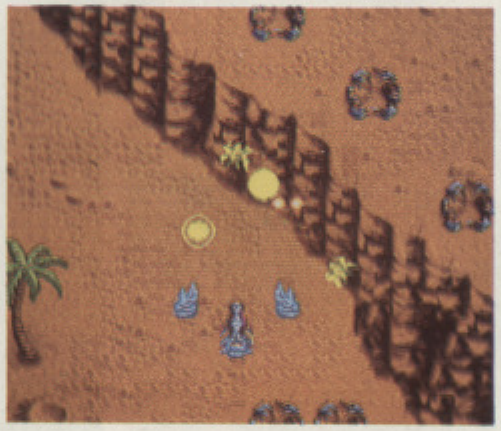
Strange icons that have nothing to do with the rest of the game appear at the silliest of times. For example you may find yourself battling with the trickiest of enemies when an orange or a bannana appears below you to be collected for extra points, Pac-Man style.





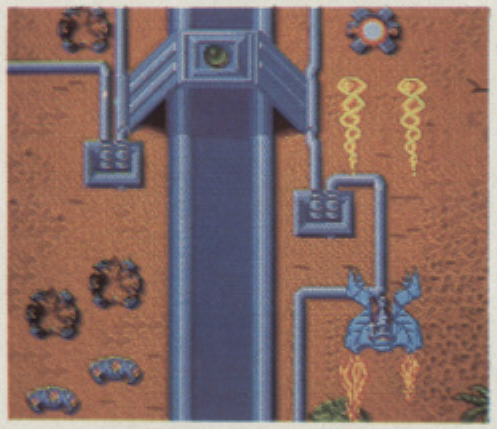


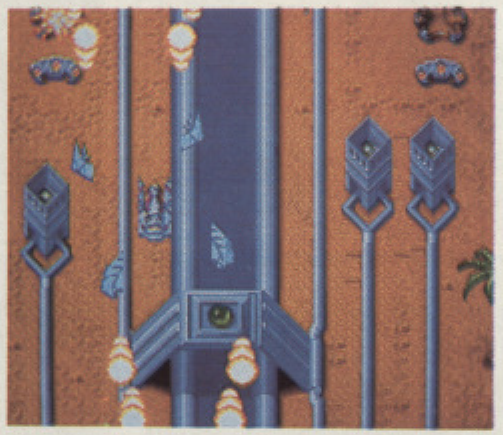


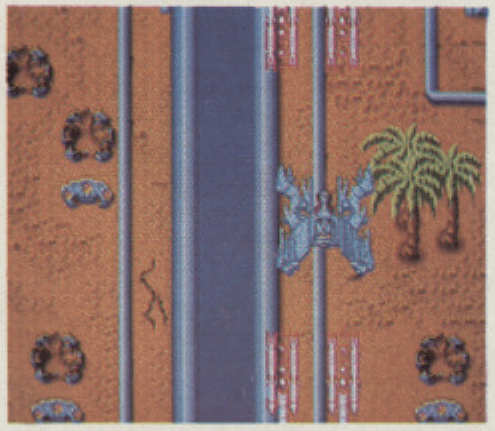


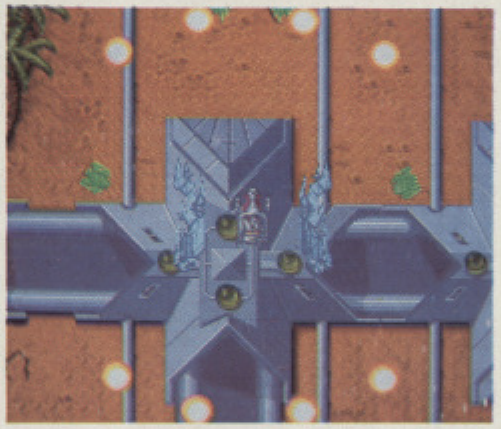














A Wow! Hybris is so addictive that it should almost come with a Government health warning. It's true that it offers very little that hasn't been seen before, but all of the best elements of the shoot 'em up have been taken and spliced together into a glorious package that moves well, looks fantastic and feels better than just repeated throughout, as there are enough variations to keep it from becoming irritating. Sure, it's a pattern deal, with certain groups of swarming aliens attacking at set points along the route, but the landscape is so long and the action so engrossing that you'd be hard pressed to remember where you are, let alone what's going to attack next. If there is a problem it's with the game's length – there are only three levels, and the arcade style 'Continue Play' option combined with the ability to customise the craft and the alien attack patterns means that it won't take a great deal of perseverance to see things through to the end. That said, it's up to the individual to decide whether to exercise these two options, and played in the default mode it should take quite a while to master. Hybris is everything that a good shoot 'em up should be – and then some.

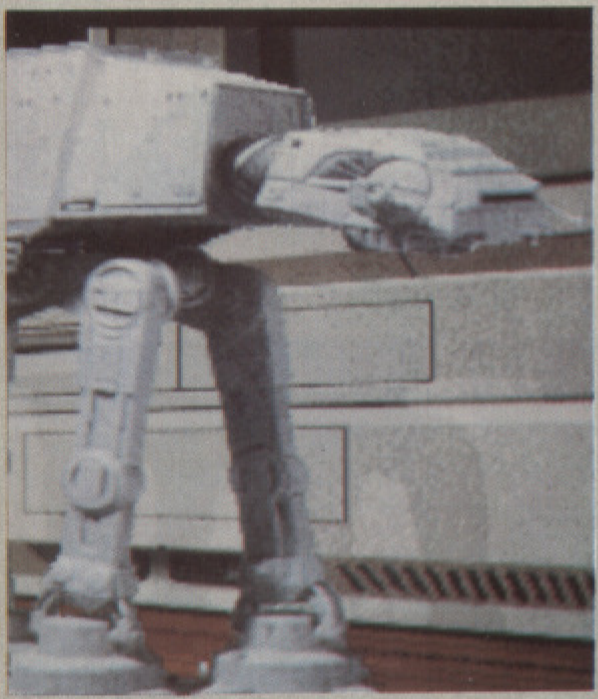
PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	91%
VALUE	78%

OVERALL 88%

ST An Atari version is currently reaching its final stages of development and should be in the shops within the month at the same price as the Amiga.

PC IBM-compatible owners can also look forward to their own version of Hybris within the month and at the same price as both the other versions. A CGA version is a certainty, but as yet details are vague on both ECA and VGA.

DEMOS



So what are demos all about? Or rather, what should they be all about? This is difficult. There are some people who reckon that demos should consist of little more inspiring than a digitised image, some sampled sounds with a not-so-jolly 'boom-chakka-boom' piece of music and a terribly dreary, egotistical scrolling message. This is not very interesting.

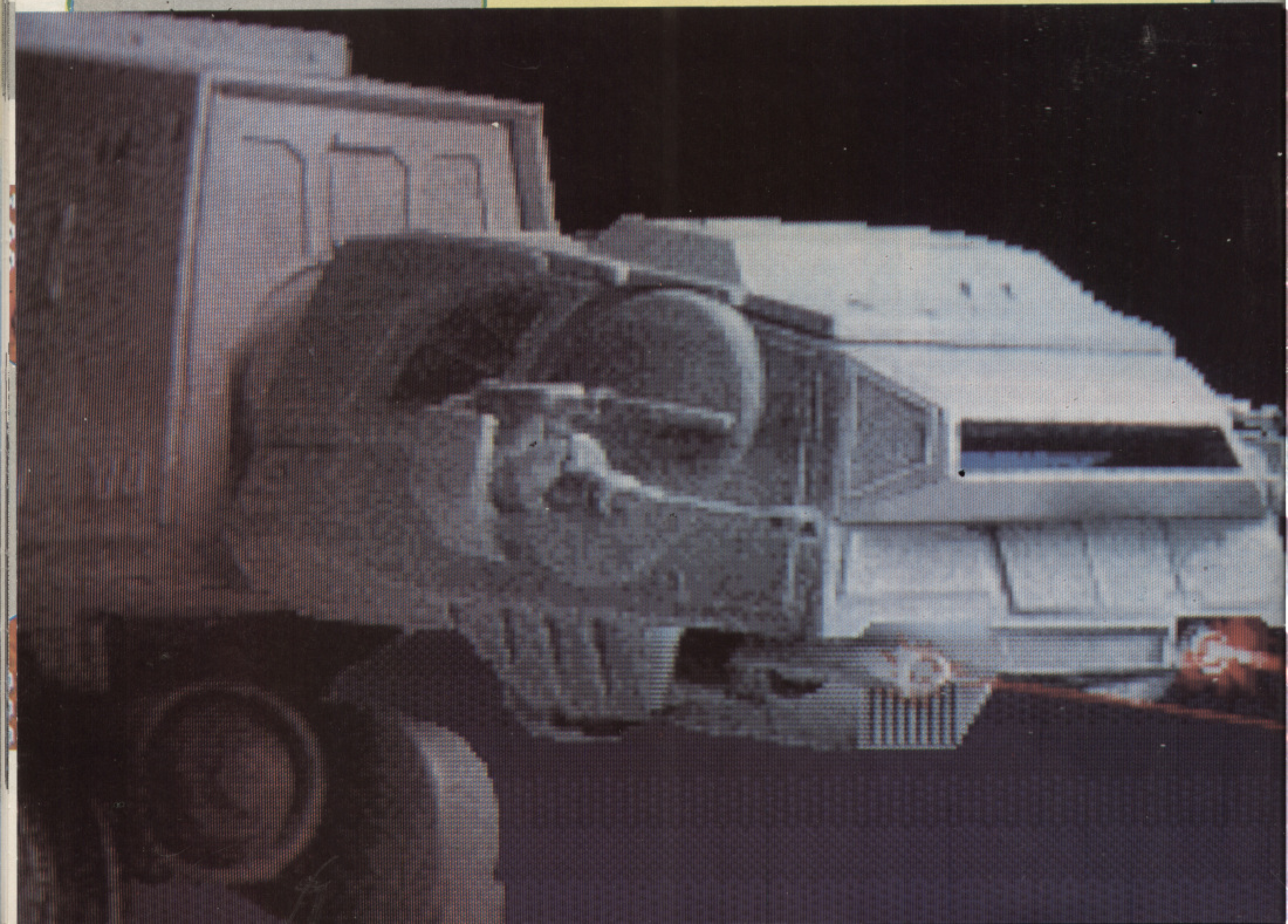
Some feel demos should feature innovative new programming tricks and techniques, inspiring other hackers to push the machines further and further, towards that elusive limit.

And then there are those who see demos as an art form of sorts. A chance to show off more than still-life artistic talent with such delights as series of cleverly constructed animations complemented by suitable sounds and clever clever programming techniques. Now you have something to impress your elders with.

But this section is also about you. You and art on a comparitively mundane but by no means any less worthwhile level. If you have any pictures or pieces of music you may have produced, why not throw it our way? Even if it's only for an appraisal.

It's a chance to see your handiwork in print. So come on all you budding binary Boticellis and Bachs. Come on all you Public Domain libraries. Let's see what you are made of, no?

Please bear in mind: someone, somewhere may want to get hold of any demos featured, so we need to know where they can get them. Public Domain demos mean readily available demos. As for most of the demos featued here, once again contact 17 Bit at PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX, or telephone (0924) 366982.

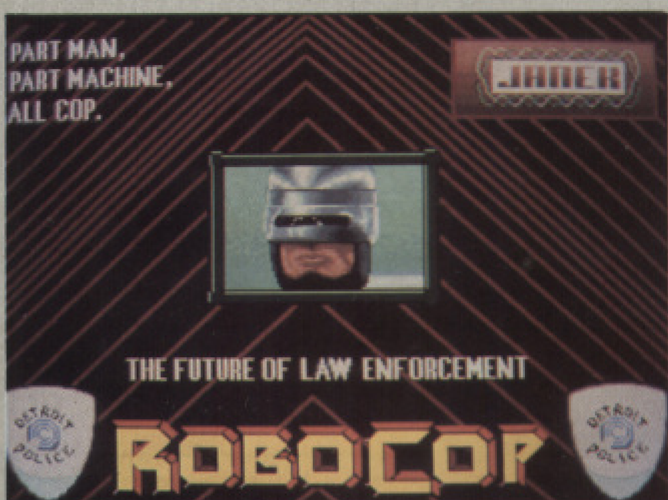




ALIEN BASHING

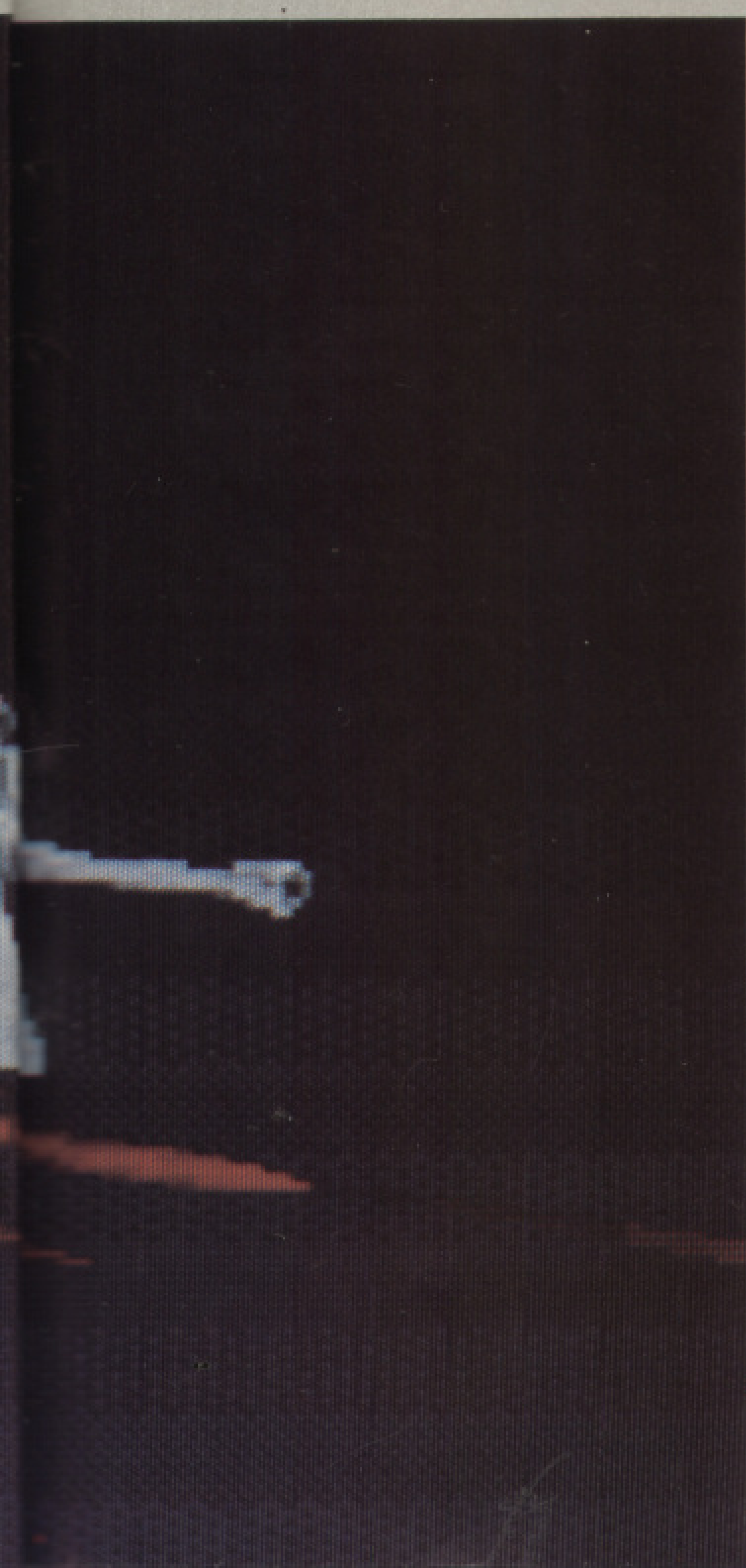
A Put together by Swedish hackers Ipec Elite, the highlight of this multi-load demo is **Power Run**, a simplistic horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up which provides a good 10 minutes of alien bashing. Screens from Cinemaware's **Defender Of The Crown** and a seemingly never-ending supply of scrolling messages play a supporting role.





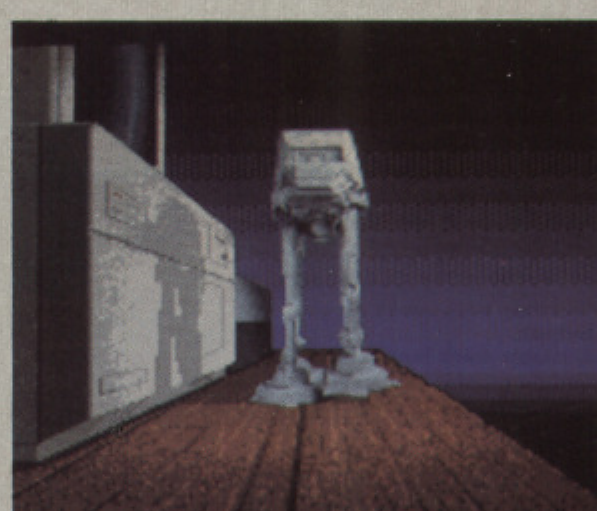
MURPHY, IT'S YOU...

ST "Please put down your weapon. You have 20 seconds to comply." The chilling words of ED-209 have been sampled from **RoboCop**, along with a few other choice snippets to accompany a digitised screen of the man himself. But that's all there is to this demo. A few animated digitised frames of ED to accompany the quality sound would have livened things up a bit. A demo only for Robo-parahernalia starved freaks in desperate need of a fix.



AT-AT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT

A The Commodore show at the end of last year played host to a visual and aural extravaganza. The All Terrain Armoured Transport Walker from **The Empire Strikes Back** plods across a desk, firing the occasional laser burst. Appropriate sampled sound rounds off a classy demo – and it's not surprising, as it only works with 2MB of memory! A cut-down 1Mb version is available which allows you to view the sections of animation, but that's the best you can expect to see – unless someone removes several memory-gobbling frames of animation.







'ELLO JEAN, GOTTA NEW DEMO?

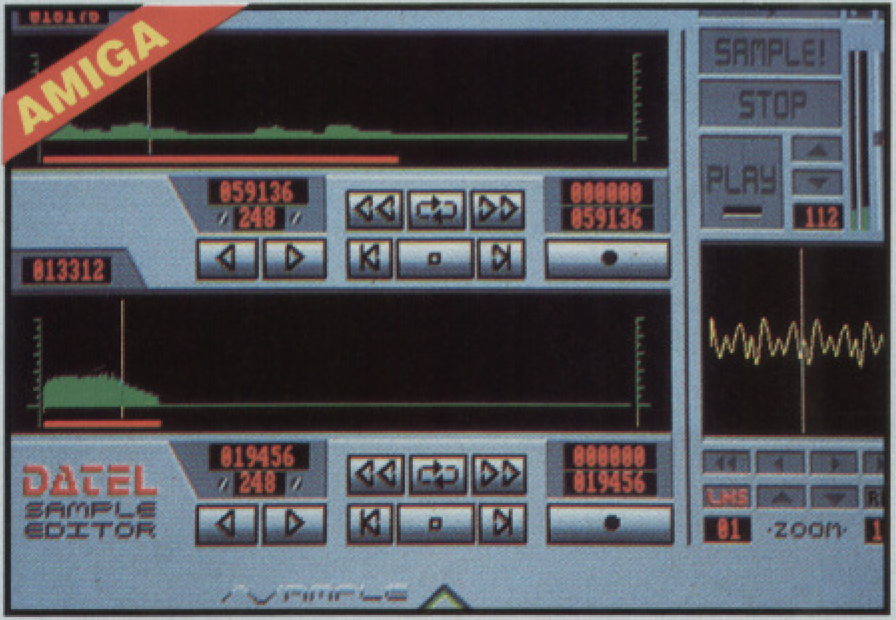
A Two musical greats meet on one music-packed diskette. Jean Michel Jarre's **Revolutions I** and **London Kid** (complete with sampled Hank Marvin) feature with Amigarised renditions of Rob Hubbard's **Confuzion** (amongst others). The Jarre is adequate fodder for fans, but the Hubbard tributes don't quite have the originals' spark.



DADDY, WHAT'S *THAT?*

A No hedgehog jokes, please. Derek and Clive, alias Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, say lots of rude (and vagely amusing – well, if you like rude alternative humour) things over two disks. Boot the second disk and tune in and drop out to the sampled sounds of Stewart Copeland's theme tune to **The Equaliser**. Sorry gals, no digitised Edward Woodward to drool over.

DATEL ELECTRONICS





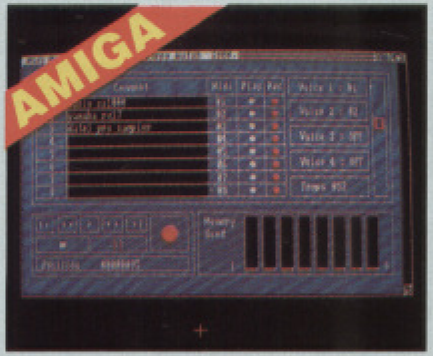
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ACE 2

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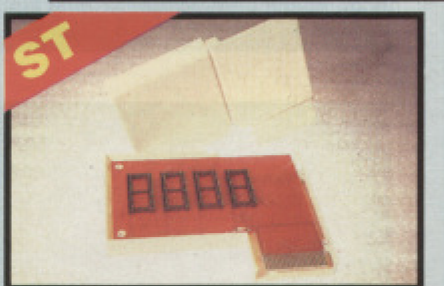
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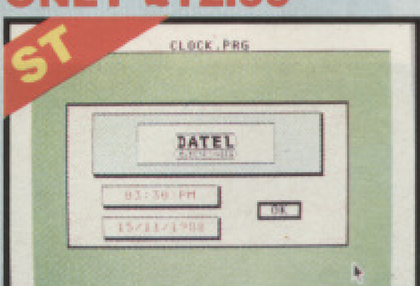
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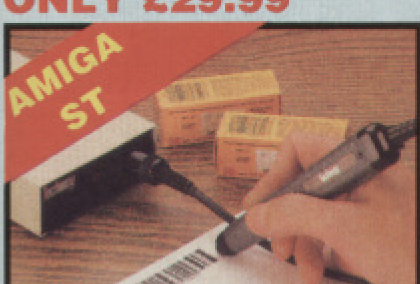
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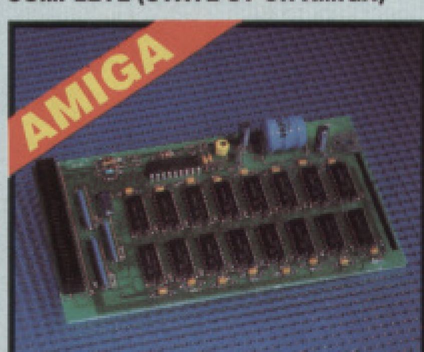
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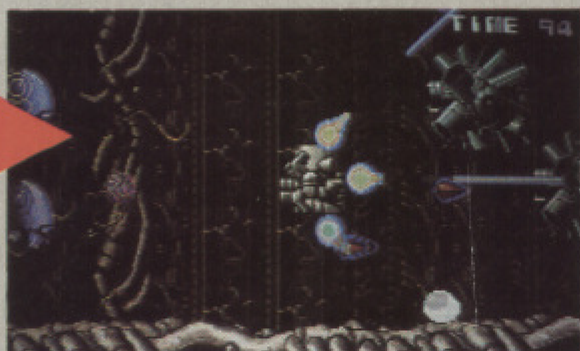
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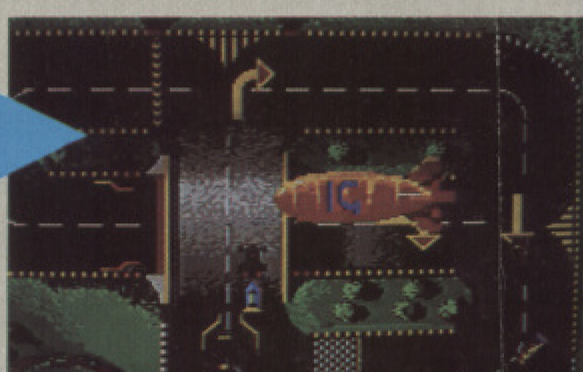
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ACE 2

Ciaŕan Brennan and Gary Whitta pool their resources and set off for a spell of flying, driving and fighting in the local slot shop . . .











The 'bubble' craft (below) are equipped with zero firepower – however they act as leeches on contact, allowing the mobile space cannons (right) to open fire on your stricken craft.



A massive destructive arsenal can be built up along the way, with atomic power guns, three-way beams, missiles, speed-ups and the deadly Rensha (chain weapon) all up for grabs.

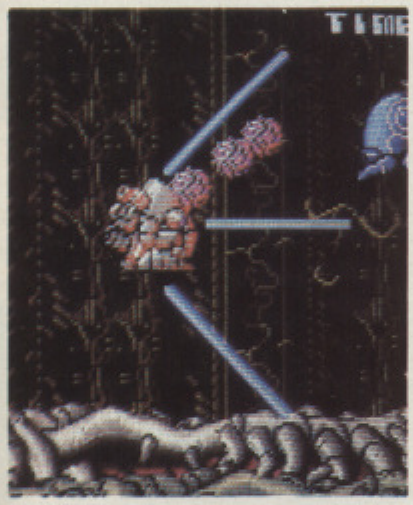


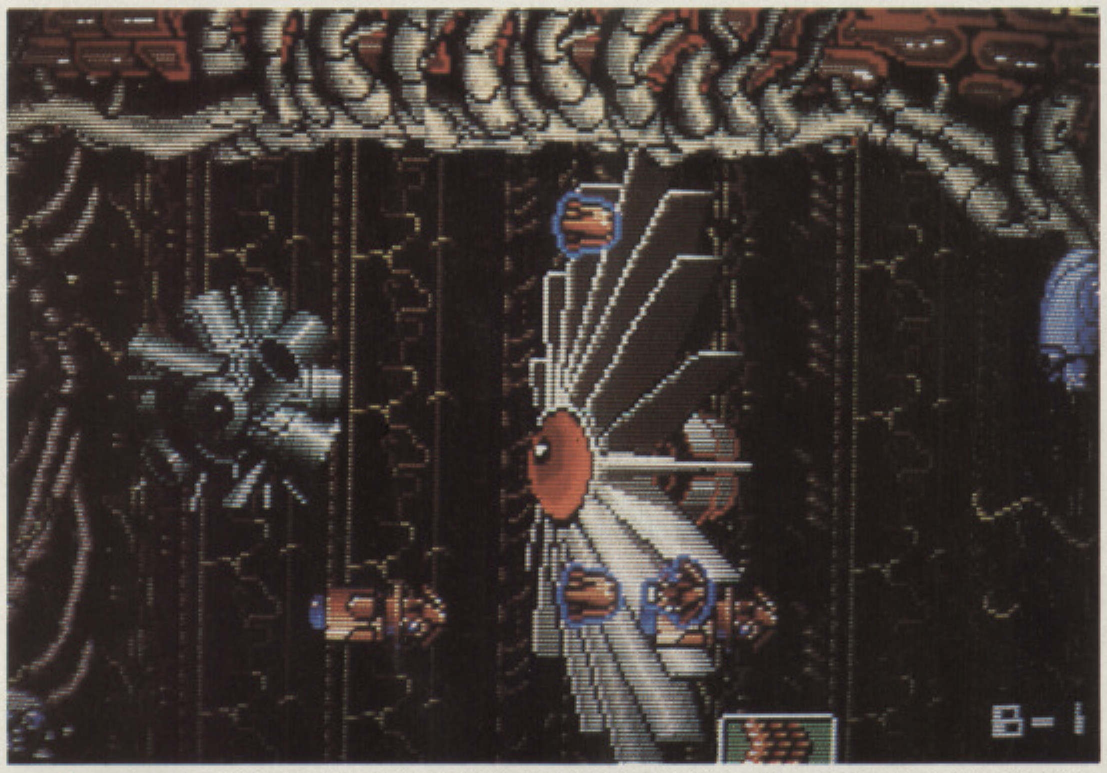




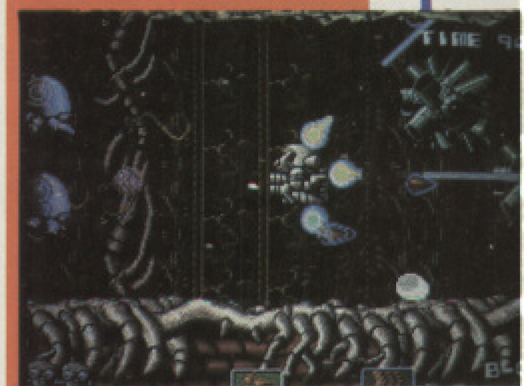
ATOMIC ROBO-KID (UPL)





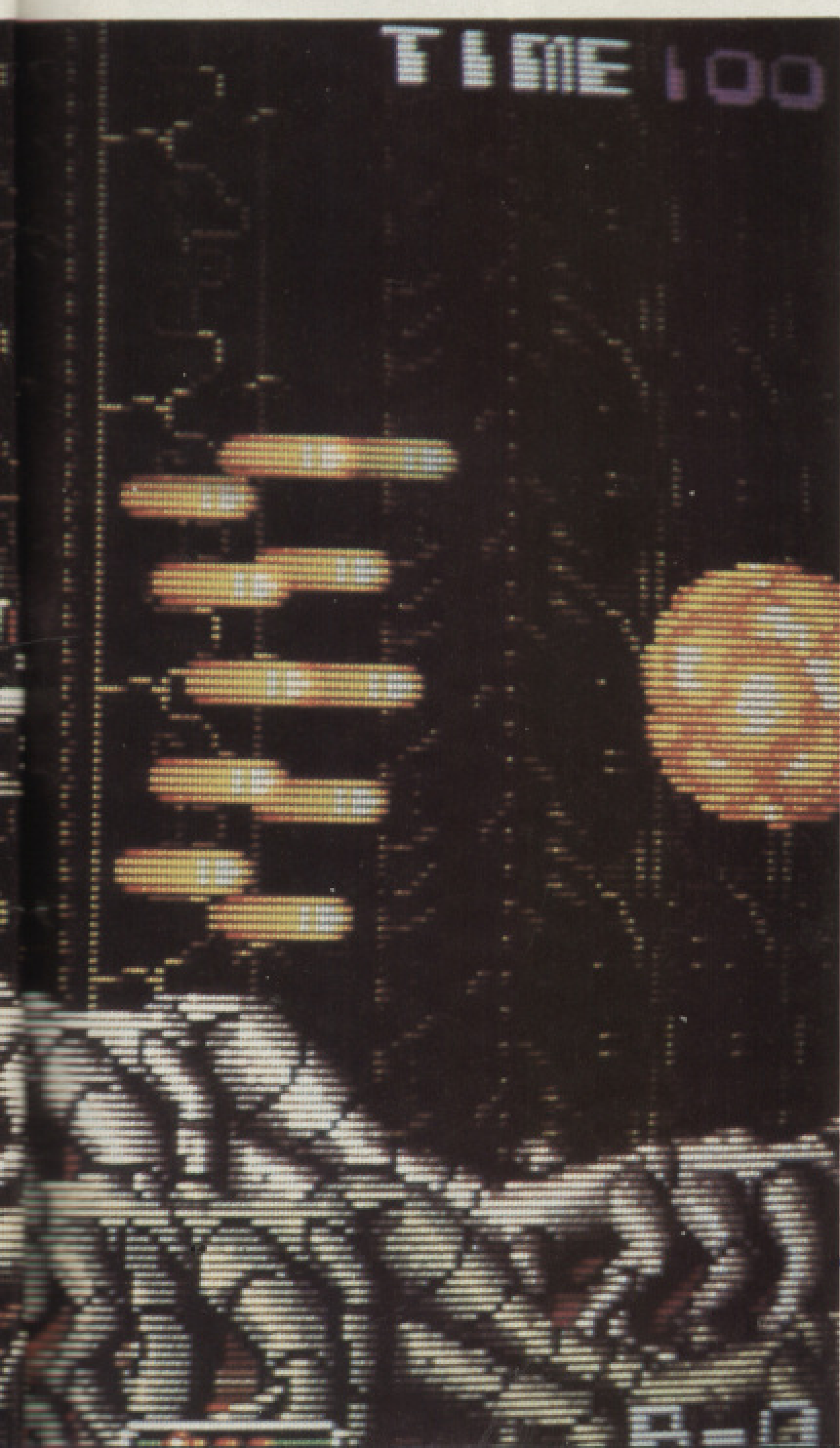


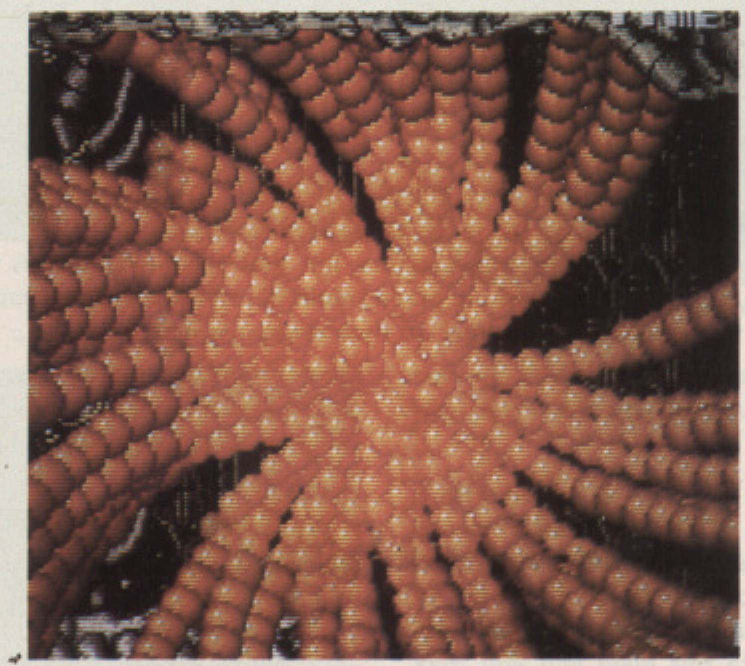
The flying eye awaits any Robo-Kid who manages to battle his way to the end of a level. Don't hang about though, as a friendly voice soon pipes up to inform you that all destruction must be carried out within a strict time limit.



The title suggests some kind of 'son of RoboCop' scenario, but unfortunately this doesn't even enter into it. Instead you have a cute little robot, packed to the gills with destructive capabilities and battling through a right to left scrolling subterranean world.

It may look and sound fairly ordinary, but the finger-shattering firepower and constant action raises this into the elite ranks of 'essential' coin-ops. This may seem like high praise – especially when you consider that the majority of the opposition doesn't return your fire – but the awesome rate of destruction and speedy action is guaranteed to hook any serious aggressor.





BOOOOM! one of the most entertaining effects is saved until your ship slows up.

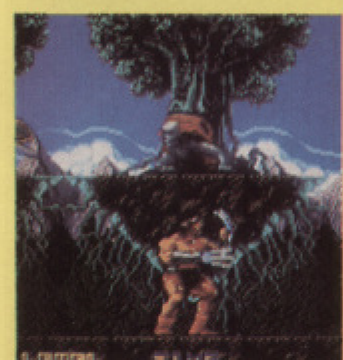


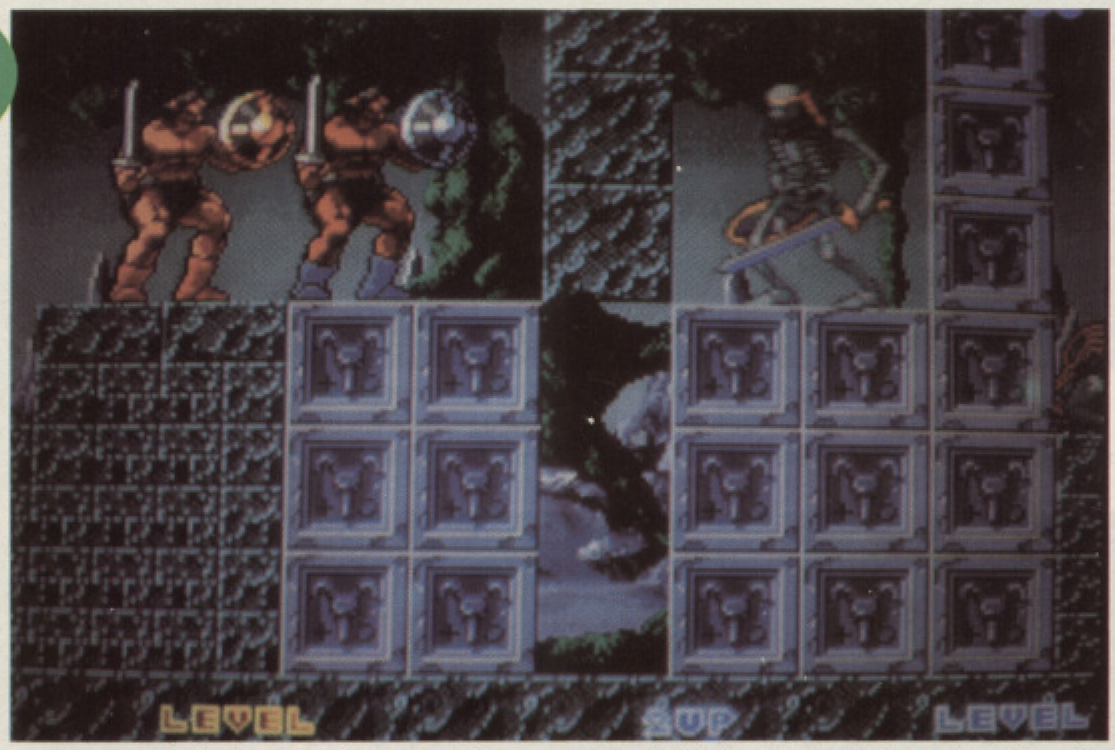




The static lizard creature appears at regular intervals along the route – but don't let this lack of movement fool you into thinking that he's a walkover...

NASTAR WARRIOR (Taito)



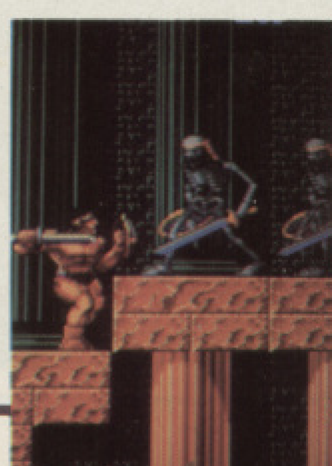


It's two against one, but that green wall blocks the way. A quick swipe of the flashing blade should finish off the silver building blocks and allow the fearless duo to continue on their way.

Make way for yet another one or two player horizontally scrolling combat game with nothing to distinguish it from the pack except large, detailed sprites and the vaguest 'scene setter' in history. Those who thirst for a neat storyline to begin their arcade ramblings will have to look elsewhere, as the best that this one can offer is: "So the courageous young man has risen in revolt against the wicked group." Informative or what?

This lack of imagination carries on into the gameplay, which resembles Rastan – but doesn't even come close to achieving its playability. A two player option allows a fair degree of teamwork, but the relatively small playing area means that for once this can almost become a disadvantage.

Armed with a basic sword and shield, the lone hero climbs towards a pair of undead enemies. Complete this level and you may be greeted by another mysterious mystical message: "Now I have opened a fire, I am determined to hold my ground at any cost."





Occasional props (such as this swinging rope) can be used to help the muscular warrior in his quest. However, these are so few and far between that they make little or no difference to the gameplay.

WHEEL (Electr

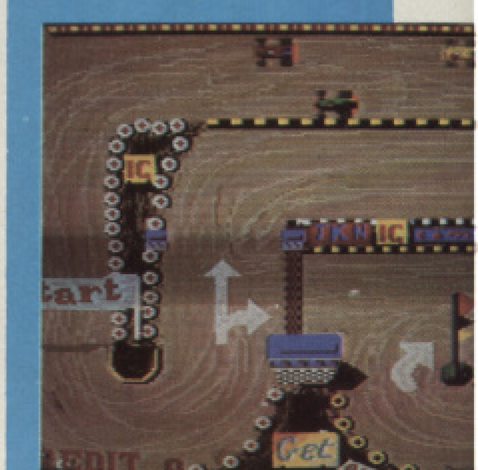
Take a drive down memory lane into a game that's right down the street of such creaky old rockers as Super Sprint and its follow-up, Championship Sprint.

Five cars line up on the starting grid, with either one or two of these controlled by the cabinet mounted steering wheels. Strangely, no indication is given as to which car comes under the player's control, but a quick spot of trial and error is all that's needed

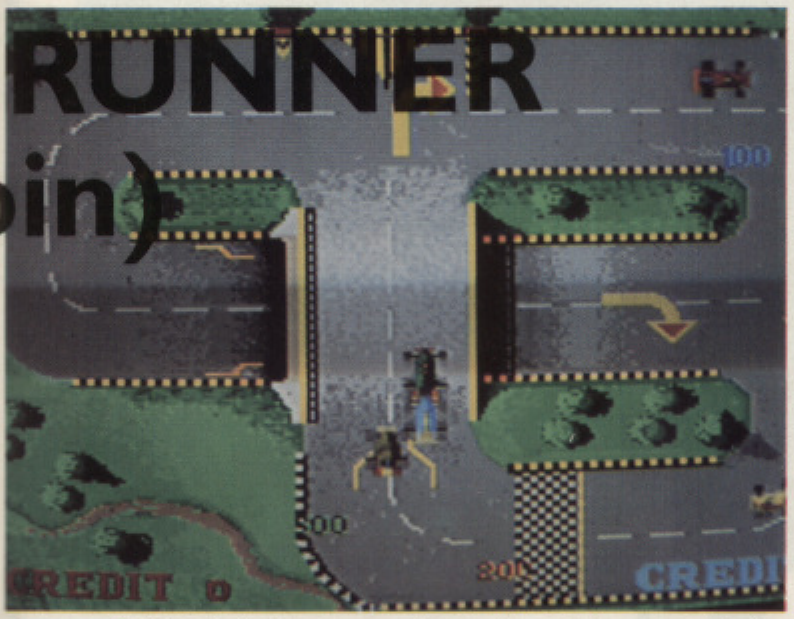


to crack this little problem.

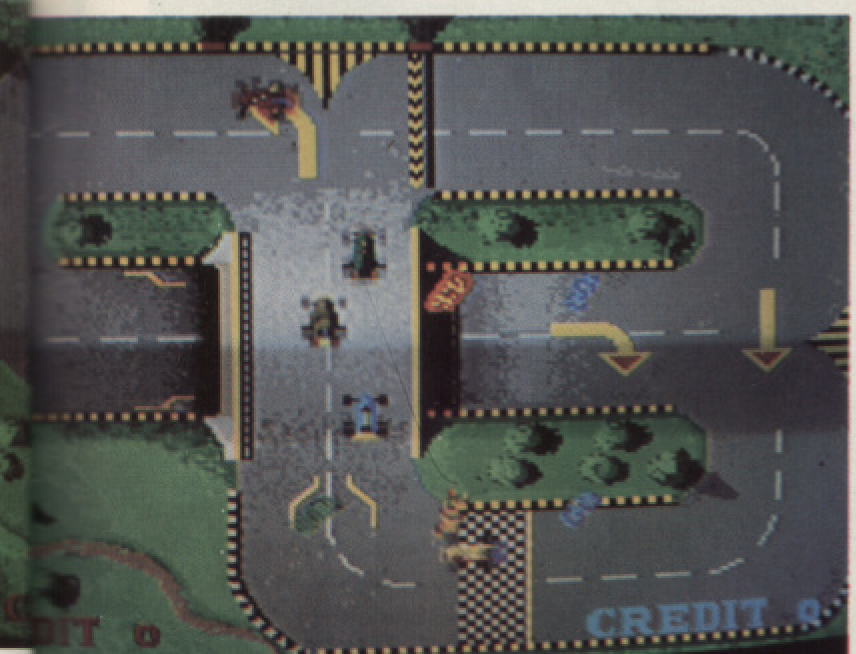
As far as it goes, Wheels Runner is quite well executed – but the average arcadester will probably demand a little more from a racing game in this hi-tech era.



RUNNER
Poin)



Illuminated arrows show the route around the constantly changing circuit. Those drivers silly enough to ignore these friendly warnings may fall foul of the striped barriers which open and close unexpectedly (centre top).





State of the art? Hardly... and although this may only be a cosmetic closing screen, it's indicative of the general aged appearance of the whole game.

Blimps and helicopters pass over the circuit, dropping extra points and fuel pods onto the track. The extra points come in handy, but filling the cars' tanks doesn't really seem to make much difference.



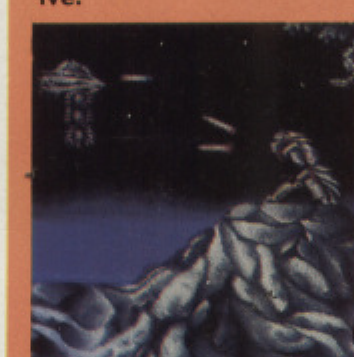


SAINT DRAGON (Jaleco)

The latest in a long line of R-Type-type shoot 'em ups features some neat weaponry and exquisite fantasy-type aesthetics. Apart from the obligatory futuristic metallic levels, much of the action takes place against eerie nightscapes and dense forests. The idea is nothing new, but the execution is impressive.



There are plenty of 'power-up' opportunities between waves of ground-based and airborne aliens, with tokens increasing the firepower shot from the dragon's mouth.





The inventive use of alien enemies in *Saint Dragon* helps it to stand out from the crowd... like this metallic panther which pounces, claws extended, from its camouflaged hiding place.

There have been large end of level aliens before, but not like this rampant mechanical bull.





DOWNTOWN (Seta)





Later levels see the mob's army backed up by a frightening array of femme fatales, fire-eating punks and bent coppers.

The back streets and alleyways of the windy city scroll by as your adversaries attack in 'waves', usually two or three at a time. the hero's repertoire consists of the usual kicks and punches – beefed up by the ability to use any dropped weapon.



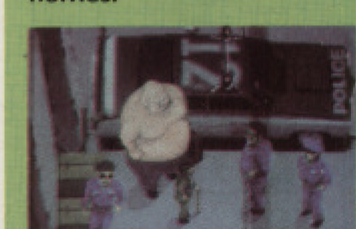
When you're on the run from the mob in downtown Chicago with nowhere to hide, what do you do? Simple. Take to the streets and rely on your hands and feet to wipe out anyone in your way. In *Double Dragon* style, *Downtown* pits you (or you and a friend) against an urban army of street punks, mafia hit-men and corrupt cops.

An *Ikari Warriors* type swivel-headed joystick is used to turn the character's upper torso towards his assailants. This takes a little getting used to, but eventually adds a whole new dimension to the gameplay. Unfortunately, this little twist is the one thing which isn't convertable – otherwise, conversion fans can probably look forward to a pretty accurate version making it into their homes.



It takes at least three hits to drop each bad guy, but even then they come back for more. Knock each villain over four times and his lifeless body is left to litter the street for the remainder of the level – an imaginative departure from the 'disappearing corpse' scenario which this type of game usually throws up.

Even being a pedestrian is deadly in this town, as high-powered cars flash by without any hint of a warning – funnily enough, these motors never seem to do the enemy any damage... suspicious eh?





PICS PE & PIX

Born of Hardor in an age of Sword and Sorcery... erm, well actually Arnold Schwarzenegger was born in 1948, the son of an Austrian police chief. Tim Green traces the big man's rise from obscurity to the silver screen and the computer monitor.



What is it about Arnold Schwarzenegger that makes him and his films so popular and such suitable material for computer games? Maybe it's that the great man is virtually a caricature of himself – and his wit and charisma is certainly unmatched in his field. Best of all though, Arnie never takes himself seriously in the way that certain other Stallones do, and it's this sense of humour which ultimately sets the Austrian giant apart from the crowd.

This would be a better story if it began with a 98 pound weakling who spent his early life rubbing the sand from his eyes – but it doesn't. The young Arnold Schwarzenegger was a normal child with a passion for soccer and a strong competitive streak. However, this all changed when he became fascinated with the movies – especially those featuring hunks of solid beef-like athlete turned movie star Steve Reeves.

The 15 year-old Schwarzenegger proceeded to plaster his walls with pictures of hunky men clad only in underpants – it was no wonder then that his parents sent him to a psychiatrist. Eventually however Herr and Frau Schwarzenegger realised that their son meant business – and anyway who'd argue with an adolescent with pecs that large?

Young Arnold's future obviously lay in the lucrative US iron-pumping circuit – and when he landed there in 1968 his almost unpronounceable name was already familiar to the body-building fraternity. This multi-syllable moniker (which actually translates as 'Black Ploughman') proved too much of a mouthful for the poor yanks, who dubbed him 'The Austrian Oak'.

Over the following decade the Oak's record was staggering. He won a record seven Mr Universe titles, but still remembered those Steve Reeves movies and remained determined to become a film star.

Eventually, in 1969, the big break came. Unfortunately though it came in the form of **Hercules In New York** – a truly appalling film where Arnie's voice was dubbed and the plot was laughable. Bearing in mind that the original title was **Hercules Goes Bananas**, it's not hard to see why.

After another four years of pectoral pumping, movie stardom beckoned a second time with Robert Altman's **The Long Goodbye**. Once again fame remained just around the corner







THE ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER STORY





though, as Arnie played a heavy with only one line – and his name appeared in the credits as Arnold Strong! (This was possibly a ploy to promote a series of body-building products which Arnie was endorsing at the time).

Spurred on by this slight taste of movie stardom, Mr Strong retired from body-building in 1974 – only to be tempted back the following year to star in George Butler's **Pumping Iron**. This immensely entertaining film covered the 1975 Mr Olympia contest, and the eventual showdown between the two favourites: The Austrian Oak himself and Lou Ferrigno (who was later to paint himself green and achieve a degree of stardom as The Incredible Hulk).

Although on the surface it was a straightforward documentary, the film gave Schwarzenegger an opportunity to display his considerable charm and was a massive hit when it appeared in 1977. This was an especially happy period in Arnie's career, as his appearance in Bob Rafelson's **Stay Hungry** won him a Golden Globe award as best newcomer.

Schwarzenegger's acting talent wasn't his only blossoming facet – he was also developing a talent for self publicity. Arnie would be quoted as saying that lifting weights felt better than sex, or that he only ate cheesecake and ice cream – in fact he'd say anything to grab attention. This ploy soon transformed the ex muscle man into an unlikely household name.

One last cinematic failure came in 1979 with **Cactus Jack** (originally **The Villain**). Although this spoof western featured Kirk Douglas and Anne Margret, Arnie's appearance as the 'handsome stranger' prompted one Hollywood critic to claim that the horse had a wider range of expression than The Austrian Oak. However he and the rest of Arnie's critics were soon to be silenced in a most emphatic manner – **Conan** was just around the corner.

Conan The Barbarian and **Conan The Destroyer** are, in essence, B-movies – beefed up by copious dollops of brutal violence and steamy sex. However Arnie's deadpan delivery of the horrendous dialogue soon made him a public favourite, and with hindsight it's easy to see that even at this early stage Arnie was playing for laughs.

This period also marked Arnie's computer debut, but **Conan's** sex and violence didn't appear quite so prominently as Datasoft's game for the PC and 8-bit machines all but ignored the film's flavour. Rather than produce an arcade adventure or sword fighting game, the American company opted for a slightly more obscure format. A chunkier than Pedigree Chum pixelated form of everyone's favourite bronzen beefcake had to negotiate eight simplistic platform scenes... and that was it.

Ironically, it was Palace's **Barbarian** that captured perfectly the feel of the Conan films. The game's designer, Steve Brown is a big fan of Arnold's – and the Conan series in particular. In fact, he goes so far as to say that if it wasn't for Conan, there wouldn't have been a **Barbarian** game. Many of the combat moves, including the decapitation sequence and the Web Of Death were inspired by the fight scenes in the **Conan** and **Red Sonja** films. The characters were based entirely on Arnie's interpretation of the Conan character, and sound from **Red Sonja** was sampled.

The success of the Conan series could have guaranteed our hero a future in pig-skin loin cloths, but bravely he decided to change direction and try out new styles. This gamble paid off – and how!

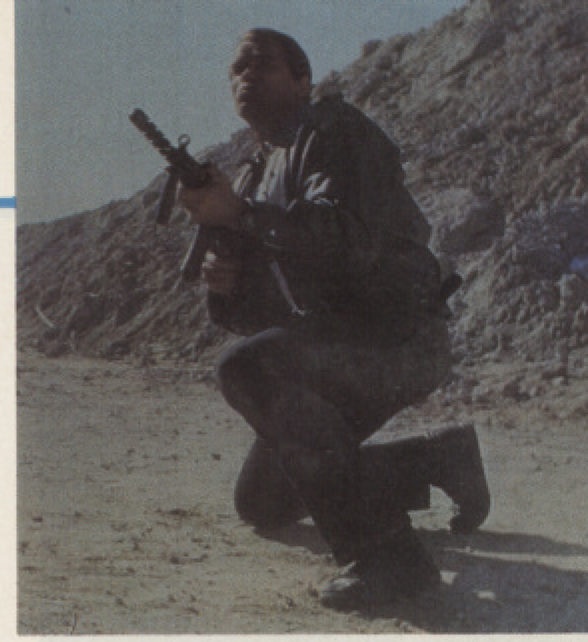
I'LL BE BACK

Schwarzeneggers's next part saw him take the role of an android assassin, sent back in time to kill the mother-to-be of a rebel leader. James Cameron's 1984 smash **The Terminator** may not have cast Arnie in the most sympathetic of parts, but the public loved him and the Steve Reeves fan from Austria had finally arrived.

Unfortunately, what is arguably Arnie's best role also had the most potential for a game but never made it to the home computer. Danish software house cum hardware manufacturer Robtek acquired the licence to interpret **Terminator** and **Terminator II** over a year ago, but sadly went into receivership before anything saw the light of day.

LET OFF SOME STEAM

By now it seemed as if Arnie had found his niche, as his next movie once again saw him taking the title role and laying waste to almost





anyone who came across him. **Commando** required Arnie to waste an enemy about as large as an average first division crowd, but it also had a spot of romance in the form of Rae Dawn Chong. Unfortunately most of the love scenes remained on the cutting room floor, but at least director John Irvin managed to retain most of the one-liners... including the immortal 'let's party'.

The loin cloth was to make one final appearance before Arnie finally decided to pack it in, this time in the **Conan** lookalike **Red Sonja**. Fortunately however this turkey was mostly seen as a vehicle for a statuesque Danish newcomer, Brigitte Neilsen, and Arnie's small part remains forgotten.

This slight creative dip continued with his next project, **Raw Deal**. Although an attempt was made to cast Arnie in a more sensitive role, his one-man quest against the mafia inevitably ended up in the usual orgy of violent death. Ultimately, the role of a former FBI agent turned undercover agent is one that Arnie fails to pull off.

STICK AROUND

With **Raw Deal** in the can, Schwarzenegger jetted down to Mexico to film **Predator** with Carl 'Apollo Creed' Wathers. The film has all of the right ingredients from the start: macho heroics, comradeship, funny dialogue, plenty of action and, of course, breathtaking special effects (note for trivia fans: the actor inside the monster suit also played Harry in **Bigfoot And The Hendersons** – one sweaty guy). **Predator** is a cracking way to spend 90 minutes, especially as it sees Arnie back in top form.

System 3's production of **Predator** for Activision marked Arnie's second software role, and his 16-bit debut. Tim Best's storyboard stuck closely to the film's plot, which arguably isn't difficult – until you look at what Datasoft came up with in **Conan**.

Four horizontally scrolling levels of shoot 'em up action featured guerillas galore and even a final confrontation with the creature itself.

WHAT A HOT HEAD

Predator's macho antics were followed by more of the same in last year's **The Running Man**. Based on a futuristic short story by Stephen King, it marked a return to science fiction for Arnie and saw an unusual face in the director's chair – none other than TV's famous Paul Michael 'Starsky' Glaser. Arnie finds himself as a contestant in a deadly futuristic game show, where instead of winning a pair of matching 'his and hers' scooters you'd be lucky to escape with your life. The by-now famous one-liners reach new heights (depths?) in this film – for example as he slices one bad guy in two he turns to the camera and mutters the immortal 'he had to split'.

Grandslam Entertainments has the licence to this one, with work nearly completed courtesy of Emerald Software. Once again the game takes advantage of the film's suitability, with each of the scrolling levels mirroring one of the film's sections.

WE SHOOT THEM FIRST

The next production off the Schwarzenegger production line, **Red Heat**, is just finishing its cinematic run. Here, Arnie plays a Russian cop who finds himself in Chicago hunting out the crooks who killed his partner. His wise-cracking American sidekick is Jim Belushi, with the pair combining to make a similar team to the Nick Nolte/Eddie Murphy pairing in director Walter Hill's previous effort **48 Hrs**.

As is now the trend with film tie-ins, Ocean snapped up the licence way in advance and commissioned Special FX to carry out the conversion.

Arnie may have cornered the market for playing witty tough guys, but the big man is quoted as saying: "When I see films like **Police Academy** and **Ghostbusters** I want to be in them," Rather than meaning that he wants to waste Bill Murray *et al*, this points to his great desire to play all-out comedy. And in a couple of weeks time you'll be able to see his first efforts in this genre when **Twins** comes to your local cinema.

This unlikely 'buddy' movie casts Arnie and Danny DeVito as twin brothers conceived through artificial insemination. As a result of some unorthodox experimentation, Schwarzenegger inherits all of the good genetic qualities – strength, kindness, intelligence etc – while DeVito emerges with a body beyond salvation and a nasty temper to boot. **Twins** has already been a huge smash Stateside, with reports hailing Arnie as possessing a rare gift for comedy.

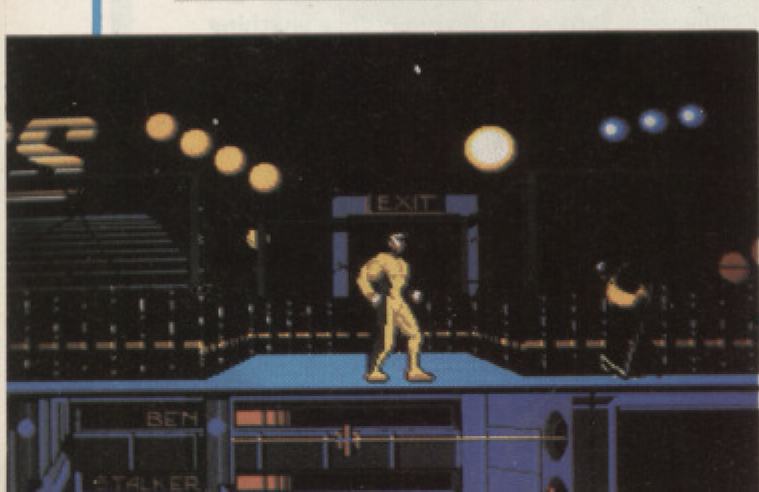
So well done Arnie... all the way from Austrian Oak to DeVito's twin in 20 years. Other projects which the great man is currently engaged in include a film based on the cartoon character **Sgt Rock**, and **Total Recall**, directed by Paul '**RoboCop**' Verhoven – both of which should eventually prove perfect fodder once again for computer conversion.

So what does the future hold? How about a remake of **Singing In The Rain**, or what about a political career, following the departure of one of his all-time heroes, Ronald Reagan?

Maybe in another 20 years or so Arnie will have added romantic comedy and Shakespearian drama in his repertoire and will eventually be remembered as one of the greatest all-rounders of his era – but until then LET'S PARTY.

BINARY BEEFCAKE

Conan (Datasoft)
Predator (Activision)
Coming soon...
The Running Man (Grandslam)
Red Heat (Ocean)
In limbo...
The Terminator (TBA)



VIDEO BEEFCAKE

Hercules In New York (VPD)
Stay Hungry (Warner)
Pumping Iron (Cannon)
Cactus Jack (RCA/Columbia)
Conan The Barbarian (Warner)
Conan The Destroyer (Prestwich)
The Terminator (Virgin)
Red Sonja (Cannon)
Commando (CBS/Fox)
Raw Deal (CBS/Fox)
Predator (CBS/Fox)
The Running Man (Braveworld).
Coming soon...
Red Heat (RCA/Columbia)
Twins (CIC)

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THE EMAP GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS 1988

Now that 1989 is well and truly with us, it's time to sit back and reflect on the year that's gone before. It's also time to sort out the good from the not-so-good (well, the bad actually) and hand out the gongs to those deserving companies who've strived to better the cause of home computing in general – and 16-bit in particular.

Now in its sixth year, the Emap Golden Joystick award is one of the most prestigious accolades in Europe – and it's up to you to decide who's going to get them.

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It's always difficult to know what to do with the last editorial page. A magazine needs to end, not at the end of the middle (like last month), but at the very end. We need something functional to round off the magazine nice and neatly . . . like a gossip column or a next month page. Or better still, an opinionated waffle. To this end Gary Penn pontificates about what makes games good (that's impressive as opposed to angelic).



Bruce Forsyth knew a Good Game when he saw one. Larry Grayson? . . I'm not so sure. Most reviewers like to think they do – I know I do. Psychologists would no doubt put in a good 20 pence worth. But has anyone ever thought about what makes some games better than others. What are those essential ingredients that make quality software? No-one knows for sure, although I do know for a fact that if I did know exactly what constitutes a good game, I wouldn't bother with this lark and I'd be quite a wealthy fellow by now.

However, for the benefit of the misguided, misinformed, misunderstood, and mistakes, I've put on my Pompous Hat to give these handy pointers.

Bear in mind that ultimately it's all about creating and maintaining an illusion of sorts. Where possible, insinuate that there's more to it than meets the eye. Don'y ever let the proceedings slow down without obvious reason – maintain a constant speed which the program can handle.

Having generated an atmosphere, don't destroy it. As my gran says: "There's a place for everything and everything in its place." Just as Coco The Clown would look a bit bizarre in the film **Aliens,** a flat, chunky sprite wouldn't feel at home agains a colourful, highly detailed piece of scenery. Be consistent.

You can have a great idea and beautiful aethetics and know all the clever programming tricks under the sun, but if at the end of the day the actual execution of the idea is flawed . . . Forget it.

Consider all the clones. It's rare that a clone is better than the game that inspired it, for the simple reason that it's not just a matter of copying what you see, you have to understand how and why a game works. Just because an alien moves in a certain way the first time you play a game, there's no guarantee that it's going to behave that way again. The alien in question could be responding to the movement of other aliens or indeed yourself. Anyone converting a coin-op from nothing more than a video recording, beware. To convert successfully, you have to live the part. Call it 'method programming'.

The simplest ideas are often the best. It's true. Once you have a core concept, a fundamental element, you can buld on and/or around it. Look at all the great things you can build with the humble brick.

When dealing with aliens you have to feel threatened. The best way to do this is to give each alien its own characteristics, or better still, a personality. Predetermined movement patterns aren't enough. Give them strengths and weaknesses, or aggression factors so they become nastier when they get hurt. Get the little beggars fighting each other for the pleasure of attacking you. Give them tasks – lives of their own. The Lander aliens in **Defender** move in a straightforward way, but you never know when they will attempt to carry off a Humanoid. They seem to think for themselves.

Programmers shouldn't write solely for themselves. A fixed keyboard arrangement that suits one person may not be my cup of tea – or anyone else's for that matter. What's wrong with a redefine key option? I prefer a cross formation for movement, like 'I' for up, 'M' for down, 'J' left and 'L' right, all controlled with the right hand, leaving the left to fire, activate smart bombs and so on. Gary Whitta on the other hand finds it difficult to use any arrangement other than 'Z' and 'X' for left and right, with 'P' and 'L' for up and down and the space bar to fire or jump.

Good presentation is conducive to a healthy atmosphere. Throw in something more than a simple static loading picture – like an attract sequence to whet the appetite. Delays should be minimised. The player should be able to skip any section at any time, like 'Get Ready Player' or 'Game Over' messages. Having to wait ages for a level to load with little or no interaction (and this doesn't mean having to swop disks every ten seconds) isn't much fun. Play some music. Have an animated intermission. Or better still, a simplistic but playable sub-game.

Buffers are a pain. There's nothing more annoying than being asked to press a key, only to be met with no response. So you hammer away a dozen times before anything happens – and that's a result of the first key press. The program has yet to react to the other dozen . . .

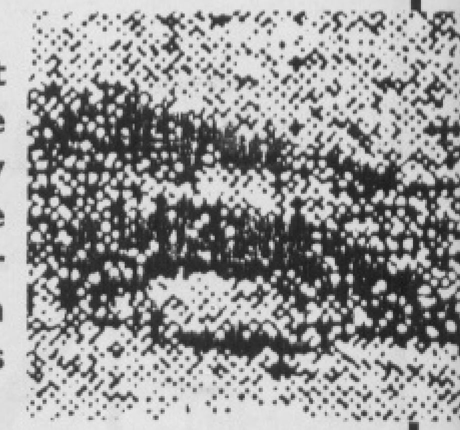
Sound is important. It should be functional and atmospheric – it should *mean* something. It's not so much what you use but how you use it. A simplistic bleep could be used more constructively than a mind-blowing sample – and anyway, samples eat up memory. Speech should be used not as a frill, but to tell you something. Simply slapping a 'boum-chaka-boum' soundtrack on the title screen isn't good enough.

The last thing a games player wants to do is get killed as soon as he or she starts to play. Get off on the right foot by making the going progressively harder. Or better still, adjust the playability to suit the player's skill or weaponry, etc.

Some games require little mental agility or skill to complete them, and it's usually simply a matter of learning what comes next. Some involve more luck than judgement, while others feature ludicrously obscure puzzles. This is not good. Attempt to sustain the player's interest by rewarding him/her with special bonuses for inventive or fortuitous play.

Consider how a game feels to play and the level of interaction. I like to feel that I am influencing the action. I want to participate not spectate. The object under control should move when you tell it – not seconds later. An instant, albeit slowly but surely response is less infuriating than a delay followed by sudden movement. Oversensitive controls should also be avoided.

Off comes the hat. That's my opinion, now give us yours. Maybe you feel strongly enough about another subject to rant on at great length, in which case write to BACKSPACE, The One, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AV.





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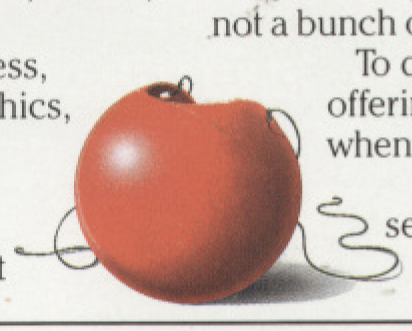
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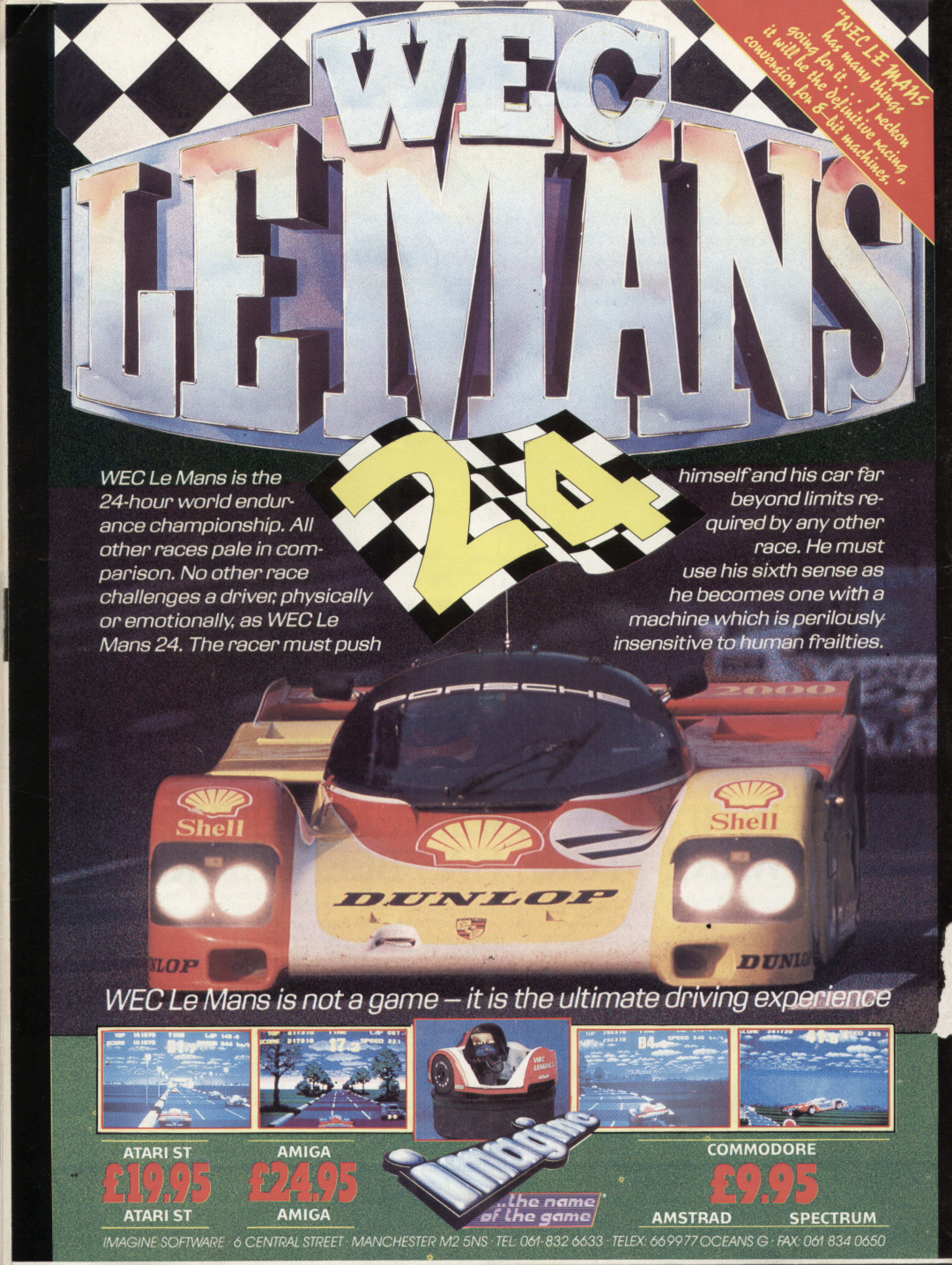
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